

Université de Montréal

**Craftsmanship as a means of empowerment  
for the traditional population of Guaraqueçaba:  
a case study**

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Ce mémoire intitulé:

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## ABSTRACT

This research is a case study of craftspeople from a traditional population that have been successful in transforming craft tradition into income-generation. These craftspeople of Caiçara culture have formed a cooperative in Guaraqueçaba, state of Paraná, southern Brazil. Caiçara is the name given to the traditional population living along Brazil south and southeast coast, of mixed Aboriginal and European descent. The natural environment of Guaraqueçaba, because of its precious and extremely high biodiversity, is one of the highest priorities for conservation in the planet. In order to protect its ecosystems, an Environmental Protection Area was created, in 1985, to regulate the use of natural resources. These regulations imposed many severe restrictions to the traditional subsistence practices and sources of income of the Caiçara communities, causing their impoverishment, a disruption in the Caiçara way of life and a great damage to their culture. This case shows the local population striving to improve their living conditions by the means of the creation of crafts for sale. The objective of this research is to understand how craft design and production allowed for their empowerment and the valorization of the local culture. The approach to data collection in the field was inspired by ethnography, using the following methods: interviews (unstructured and semi-structured), observations (participant and non-participant), and photos and physical artifacts. This case study had an exploratory nature, exploring questions related to empowerment and culture aiming to provide the scope for future research.

**KEYWORDS:** craft, empowerment, caiçara culture, sustainable development

## RÉSUMÉ

Cette recherche consiste en une étude de cas sur un groupe d'artisans qui a réussi à transformer sa production artisanale en importante source de revenus. Ces artisans, de culture caiçara, ont formé une coopérative dans la municipalité de Guaraqueçaba, dans l'État du Paraná au Brésil. Caiçara est le nom de la population traditionnelle métisse qui habite dans les zones côtières du Sud et Sud-est du Brésil. La région de Guaraqueçaba abrite des écosystèmes de biodiversité extrêmement riche et précieuse, dont la conservation est une priorité à l'échelle mondiale. Afin de réguler l'utilisation des ressources naturelles de ces écosystèmes, une aire protégée a été créée en 1985. Par la suite, de sévères restrictions entourant les moyens de subsistance ont été imposées aux communautés caiçaras, ayant comme conséquences leur appauvrissement, la discontinuation de leur mode de vie et des dommages à leur culture. Cette étude de cas s'est penchée sur une population traditionnelle luttant pour améliorer ses conditions de vie par le biais du design, activité par laquelle nous créons de la culture matérielle. L'objectif de cette recherche est de comprendre comment la création d'artisanat destiné à la vente peut être un vecteur d'autonomisation et de valorisation de la culture locale. L'approche de la collecte des données sur le terrain, inspiré de l'ethnographie, a utilisé les méthodes suivant : des entrevues (non structurées et semi-dirigées), des observations (participantes et non participantes) et des photos. Ayant un caractère exploratoire, l'étude a exploré des questions liées à l'autonomisation et la culture avec le but d'encourager et de préparer le terrain pour des recherches futures.

**MOTS CLÉS:** artisanat, autonomisation, culture caiçara, développement durable.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**CIDA** Canadian International Development Agency

**EPA** Environmental Protection Area

**DCM** Design et culture matérielle : développement communautaire et cultures autochtones

**HDI** Human Development Index

**IBAMA** Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis  
(Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources)

**NGO** Non-governmental organization

**PROVOPAR** Programa do Voluntariado Paranaense (Volunteer Program of the State of Paraná)

**SPVS** Sociedade de Pesquisa em Vida Selvagem e Educação Ambiental  
(Society for Wildlife Research and Environmental Education)

**SDC** Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

**SIDA** Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

**TNC** The Nature Conservancy

**UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## DEDICATION

To Luiz Sergio and Sandra.

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## PREFACE

The inspiration for this research project came from my empiric experience as a graphic designer involved in campaigns for environmental and social causes. When I finished my Design course, I did not want to work to feed consumerism. I intended to work on communication projects to increase awareness about some important issues, especially environmental preservation and social justice. In Brazil, a country with huge social contrasts and environmental challenges, these two issues are often tangled. I spent five years working mainly with the communication of initiatives that I cared about. It is important to stress that those were communication projects aiming mostly at the dominant class that has purchasing power. Designers, in general, are well-off people, living with their basic needs well covered, either living in developed or in developing countries. In the developing countries, designers usually are members of the dominant groups that can afford technological access. Thus most of the communicational artifacts produced for social causes are produced by members of fortunate communities and address people similar to them, mentioning deprived people without the participation of these ones.

What I found out empirically is that it is very difficult to separate communication projects for good causes from projects that stimulate consumerism. Projects and campaigns are usually sponsored by big companies or are developed by institutes related to companies. These initiatives are very useful to leverage the value of their brands and get the admiration of the society. Even projects and campaigns that have no relation to companies and brands end up being linked to consumerism. A prosperous ‘good-cause’ market has been created for lectures, events, magazines, documentary films, consultants, etc. The kind of products can be different but we are still talking about consumerism. I have many doubts whether all those activities have the power to effectively improve the reality of the excluded communities that they portray. Often in the communication process we create fictions idealizing poor communities with little relation to their reality and actual needs. I came to observe that the most successful projects in breaking the cycle of poverty and transforming life conditions – such as Afro-Reggae, in Rio de Janeiro ([www.afroreggae.org.br](http://www.afroreggae.org.br)) – were put in action by members of those marginalized communities. When the action comes from the members – in bottom-up movements – the choices of priorities and goals are grounded on their actual needs.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**







IMAGE 1: Town of Guaraqueçaba

This research is a case study of a crafts cooperative in the region of Guaraqueçaba, in the state of Paraná, in the Southern Region of Brazil. This case shows a population facing huge challenges to assure their basic needs – with their culture much constrained by severe environmental restrictions – that decided to strive to improve their living conditions. The means they made use of in their search for a better life was the creation of handicrafts for sale. In this case, artisans from traditional communities have been successful in transforming craft into income-generation. Being a research in the domain of design, it is about the creation and making of products (or crafts, if you like), and its impacts on social and natural environments. In this case study, we explore craftsmanship as a means of empowerment. Empowerment is understood here as strengthening the capacity of impoverished people to gain control over their lives and become agents of their own development. This study works with two basic propositions. First, design can be an important means of empowerment for traditional communities (Kaine, De Coninck & Bellemare, 2010; Kaine & Dubuc, 2010). Second, this study works with the proposition that an empowering action to create, produce and sell handicrafts has to valorize the local culture. Therefore, this case study focuses on the relation between empowerment and cultural valorization.

Most of the cooperative craftspeople belong to Caiçara culture. Caiçara is the name given to the traditional population living along Brazil's south and southeast coast, of mixed indigenous and European descent. For centuries, their daily life had consisted of artisanal fishing, slash and burn agriculture, subsistence hunting, vegetal extraction, and handicraft. The region of Guaraqueçaba comprises one of the biologically richest and most threatened ecosystems in the world (Conservation International, 2007; The Nature Conservancy, 2010). In order to protect this ecosystem, an Environmental Protection Area [EPA] was created in 1985. The Guaraqueçaba EPA is a conservation unit that regulates the use of natural resources in an attempt to guarantee low impacts to the environment. These regulations imposed many restrictions to the traditional subsistence practices without proposing alternatives to sustain the Caiçara communities. As a result, the Caiçara population has much impoverished since, and many villagers have lost their livelihoods. Nowadays Guaraqueçaba has one of the three worst Human Development Index (HDI) in the State of Paraná – among 399 municipalities (the characteristics of Guaraqueçaba and the Caiçara culture will be detailed in the second chapter, as well as the problematic of the case).

In the last decade, groups of local women decided to create handicrafts aiming to sell their production to tourists, therefore creating an alternative source of income. In 2003, these groups started receiving support from Provopar – Programa do Voluntariado Paranaense ([www.provoparestadual.org.br](http://www.provoparestadual.org.br)) – a public institution, linked with the government of Paraná. This partnership lasted 7 years, until 2010. With the support of Provopar, artisans of all Guaraqueçaba region have been organized in a cooperative. For most of these artisans' families, craft became an important source of income and, sometimes, their only.

Why is this case so interesting? Because many aspects of sustainable development are interwoven in Guaraqueçaba: the seek for economic viability of a business (that is a cooperative), the fight against unacceptable social injustices, the preservation of many endangered species, the disregard to native populations' knowledge about the environment, the maintenance of natural preserves by international companies in order to obtain carbon credits, etc. Sustainable development has been conceived, at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in terms of the three pillars: economic viability, social responsiveness and respect for the environment (UNESCO, 2009). The mission of Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative is to ally economic gains with reduction of regional social problems and respect for the environment. But the destitution of local populations and the unacceptable social injustices, that the cooperative

tries to combat, have been caused in great part by environmental conservation. In Guaraqueçaba, there is a clash between the three sustainable development pillars – economic, social and environmental.

This case is closely linked to the undesirable side effects of the pursuit for environmental sustainability. David Orr (2002) states that our environmental problems are themselves unintended and unforeseen side effects of actions arising from other intentions. “We intended merely to be prosperous and healthy but have inadvertently triggered a mass extinction of other species and spread pollution throughout the world” (p.14). The search for mitigating environmental degradation has produced unintended side effects as well.<sup>1</sup> The crafts cooperative is a means of mitigating the economic, social and cultural problems of Caiçara communities with a care to respect the natural environment.

This is a study especially about the means used in the pursuit of our intentions. Is this means suitable to produce the desirable results? Are intentions, means and ends aligned? Because all those miscalibrations between intentions and results reveal a disregard with the means employed (some pitfalls of the pursuit of our intentions of protecting the environment and fostering social justice are described in the section 2.3)

Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative gathers so many relevant questions about sustainable development that it could originate several case studies. From the numerous possible perspectives, this study decided to focus on the craftspeople’s capacity to be agents of their own development and to change their living conditions using their own resources and abilities, in other words, it focuses on the craftspeople's empowerment. Empowerment is the fundamental conceptual framework of this case study (described in the section 2.4). This study recognizes the importance of culture to human development and thus addresses especially the relation between empowerment and culture to understand how craft design and production at the cooperative allowed for empowerment.

The research question, the objectives and the study propositions are detailed in chapter 3. The methodological approach, the methods of data collection – inspired by

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1. In product design, one of this side-effects is well known, the *rebound* effect, in which the production of greener and lighter products ends up by stimulating consumption and increasing the unsustainability of the system (as described in Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008, p.18)

ethnography–, the fieldwork in Guaraqueçaba and the approach for interpreting the results are described in chapter 4. The results and their interpretations are presented in chapter 5, followed by a general discussion about the meaning of this case study.

## **2. CONTEXT AND PROBLEMATICS**



## 2.1 FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

This section will explain the definitions used in this study for its most elementary concepts: design, sustainability, culture and traditional cultures. A clear definition is needed because either these terms have been used in multiple senses (the case of design, culture and sustainability), or multiple terms have been used with similar meaning (the case of traditional cultures; indigenous, local or settled have also been used with similar meaning). The purpose is not to establish definitive or comprehensive definitions, but rather to clarify the direction of this work. Another polemical term is empowerment, which will be discussed in section 2.4.

### 2.1.1. Design

The design community has been struggling with the definition of this term for a long time. “The literature is filled with contrasting and sometimes contradictory definitions of design” (Buchanan, 2001). This study will use a broad definition of design proposed by Richard Buchanan because it stresses the human and universal character of the design activity.

Design is the human power of conceiving, planning, and making products that serve human beings in the accomplishment of their individual and collective purposes. (2001, p.9)

By “power”, Buchanan denotes a natural talent that may be cultivated and enhanced by education. And by “products”, Buchanan means a broad range of phenomena that includes information, artifacts, activities, services, systems and environments. Therefore, design concerns the creation of any human-made product.

This definition refers to the innate capability of humans to create and transform their environment, and, consequently, to be transformed by their creations. Tony Fry explains:

The ability to design was indivisible from humans coming into being, and thereafter the human ability to be world-transformative and world-creative. (...) Humans design, but are, in turn, designed by what results from this designing — be it as things, symbolic forms or traditions (2004).

In this sense, design is one of the most ancient human activities, directly connected to the survival of people on their land (Kaine & Dubuc, 2010). One of the most important features that puts humans apart from other species is the “way we create, use and live with a wide variety of material objects” (Dant, 1999, p. 1).

In spite of being an innate and universal talent of humans, the term ‘design’ is rarely used in this sense. Historically, in the Western world, design became recognized as a career path and as a discipline with the advent of the Industrial Revolution (Kaine & Dubuc, 2010). The term ‘design’ emerged “at a particular stage in the history of capitalism and played a vital part in the creation of industrial wealth” (Adrian Forty, cited by Reijonen, 2004), as a means of rationalizing serial reproduction. Design, as a concept, came to existence within the modern worldview and gained importance in the consumer society (Reijonen, 2004).

In this study, the term ‘design’ will be used for both craft and industrial design. Craft meaning the designing and making of artifacts with a high degree of hand-made input (The Crafts Concil, n.d.). Industrial design refers to the project of an artifact for serial reproduction.

Craft, art, and design are words heavily laden with cultural baggage. For me, they all connote the profound engagement with materials and process that is central to creativity. Through this engagement form, function, and meaning are made tangible. (David Revere McFadden, as cited in Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d.)

In principle, there is no opposition between craft and industrial design. On the contrary, as explained by Borges (2011), industrial development in many countries happened as a (con)sequence of the artisanal production. Many craft skills, developed in the European guilds, became the foundations of industrial enterprises. In many European business renown for their quality, handicrafts continue alongside machine processes, and there is still place for craft skillfulness (Giulio Vinaccia, personal communication, June 6, 2011). The case of Italian company Alessi illustrates the evolution of craft expertise alongside industrial production techniques (Borges, 2011). Another example of continuity between craftsmanship and industrial design is Japanese electronic industry. Despite being a high-tech industry, there are strong ties with Japanese artisanal heritage (Borges, 2011). However, in the matter of lifestyles and worldviews, we can see a clear rupture between artisanal and industrial production. The latter allowed for democratizing consumer goods and, consequently, the emergence of consumer society and modern worldview.

Due to this modern and industrial baggage, the word design is seldom used to name the creative abilities and the creative products of non-western cultures (Reijonen, 2004). For indigenous or traditional cultures we often use the terms ‘artisanal activity’ or ‘craft’. Based on Buchanan’s, Fry’s and Kaine and Dubuc’s statements, it is difficult – if not impossible – to distinguish design from craft. The difference is the cultural context in which the products are made.



Design is inextricable from culture. Buchanan (2001a) describes ‘design’ as an instrument of cultural life responsible for bringing the values of a culture into concrete reality, “allowing us to transform abstract ideas into specific manageable form”. But in a two-way relationship, the transformative action upon the world – which is design – modifies and constructs culture (Orr, 2002). But, what exactly is culture?

### 2.1.2 Culture

There is no standard definition of culture. Like design, culture has a myriad of definitions. This study will adopt a definition stated by Verhelst and Tyndale that understands culture as

the complex whole of knowledge, wisdom, values, attitudes, customs and multiple resources which a community has inherited, adopted or created in order to flourish in the context of its social and natural environment. (Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002, p. 10)

First and foremost, we should avoid the common misunderstanding of culture as something accessory or superficial – ‘the icing on the economic and technological cake’ (Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002). Culture permeates all aspects of life, containing a society’s perception of the meaning of life and of what constitutes ‘well-being’. It is important to stress the term ‘flourish’ in Verhelst & Tyndale’s definition, because it is deeply related to the pursuit of the ‘good life’. The good life can be described as that which brings happiness (Michaelis, 2000), that which fulfills us. “Speaking of the good life is another way of talking about flourishing peculiar to the human species and our unique way of Being” (Ehrenfeld, 2008, p. 51).

Culture can be considered the way of life common to a group of people, “the shared understandings and patterns of behavior that allow those people to live together in relative harmony, but set them apart from other peoples” (Kipuri, 2009, p.52).

Culture can be seen as a resource, since it represents all the processes by which each and every society is able to solve its own problems:

Every human group, faced by a specific and changing environment, must adapt its responses and strategies to achieve overall well-being. But this adaptation is not a one-way relationship: societies shape their environments, which in turn shape them. (...) Cultures are constantly in contact with other cultures and are continually readjusted and adapted to the new environments in which they evolve. (UNESCO, 2009, p. 193)

In general terms, for Kipuri (2009, p.52), “culture encompasses all that human beings have and do to produce, relate to each other and adapt to the physical environment.” It includes agreed-upon principles of human existence, like values and norms, as well as technical know-how and technology. It is not difficult to understand that one of the processes through which societies shape their environments can be described as design. The artifacts created to make human beings “relate to each other and adapt to the physical environment” can be described as products of design activity.

Not only human beings create things, but also we attribute meaning to them. Several authors (Eade, 2002; Sampaio, 2003; Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002), stress meaning as the most important aspect of culture. For Eade (2002), culture is the sum of all the resources – material, intellectual, emotional – on which people draw to give meaning to their lives. These meanings allow men to know and understand the things of the world. Human senses are constantly bombarded by a multitude of incoherent signals and stimuli; culture serves as filters through which we construct meaning out of incoherence (Ehrenfeld, 2008). This constructed meaning shapes our understanding about the world, our beliefs, our perceptions and our experiences. In this sense, Clifford Geertz (as cited in UNESCO, 2009) defines ‘culture’ as the ‘webs of significance’ through which people develop their values, relationships, behavior and social and political structures.

Furthermore, culture is a process, referring to both continuation and transformation (Sampaio, 2003). It means that culture does not belong only to the past, it is also the matrix for future development.

A lively culture is both a heritage and a project. It gives meaning and direction. In the words of the Mexican poet, Carlos Fuentes, ‘culture is like a seashell wherein we can hear whom we have been and listen to what we can become’. (Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002, p.11)

### **2.1.2.1 Development as a cultural expression**

Eade (2002) affirms that development itself is a cultural construct.

A society’s creative genius and its cultural identity are expressed in a tangible, practical manner by the way in which it addresses its problems in the various domains that are important to its proper functioning, and which, taken together, can be described as development action. (Caxton, cited in Eade, 2002, p. xiii)

This understanding meets United Nations recommendation – published in the 1996 report *Our Creative Diversity* – ‘for placing culture at the centre of development

thinking, since culture is precisely the medium through which individuals express their ability to fulfill themselves and is therefore an integral part of development' (UNESCO, 2009, p. 191)

For the Oxford English Dictionary, originally, 'development' means 'unfolding':

1. A gradual unfolding, a bringing into fuller view; a fuller disclosure or working out of the details of anything, as a plan, a scheme, the plot of a novel.

In the context of this study, development can be understood as the unfolding of a population's cultural matrix in the pursuit of the good life.

Briefly, culture is the matrix through which we shape our presence, as humans, in the world. Understanding culture allows us to grasp the meaning of another essential concept for this study: sustainability.

### **2.1.3 Sustainability**

The transition towards sustainability is about co-creating a human civilization that flourishes within the ecological limits of the planetary life support system. (Wahl & Baxter, 2008, p. 72)

Cultures are continually challenged by their changing environment. We all know about the challenges humanity is facing, including rapid climate destabilization, species extinction, pollution, social injustices and inequities. And we all know we have to address these problems somehow if we are concerned about the future of Humanity. This 'somehow' has been conceptualized as sustainability. Despite being rather vague, "the concept of sustainability has become the keystone of the global dialogue about the human future" (Orr, 2003).

The overall challenge of sustainability is to avoid crossing irreversible thresholds that damage the life systems of Earth while creating long-term economic, political, and moral arrangements that secure the well-being of present and future generations. (Orr, 2003)

Some questions still remain: what do we intend to sustain and what will that require of us? Pointing out the things that cannot be sustained – such as overconsumption and environmental and social degradation – is easy. In this sense, it is easier to define unsustainability than sustainability.

Unsustainability, as Ehrenfeld (2008) explains, is an unintended consequence of the addictive patterns of modern life. The concept modernity is used here to characterize the dominant cultural paradigm of the West and most industrialized nations, which has been increasingly imported by other nations trying to industrialize. Modernity, being a cultural matrix, pervades everything and is everywhere; there is no area of living that is not affected by its belief structure. Some fundamental features of modernity are the belief in objective rationality and progress, and the prominence given to technological development – technology seen as a panacea for all of our problems (Ehrenfeld, 2008; Walker, 2010)

Modernity, with its ideology of progress, sought to advance human happiness, meaning and fulfillment through industrialization and the consumption of material goods. (Walker, 2010, p. 105)

In the modern culture, human well-being has become synonymous with the possibility of individually possessing, showing off and consuming products (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008; Walker, 2010). This product-based conception of well-being entails some problems. In the first place, people increasingly associate their sense of identity with the products they own (Walker, 2010). “We have moved from a ‘Being’ mode of life to a ‘Having’ mode of life” (Ehrenfeld, 2008), and its consequences are not happiness and fulfillment.

Does compulsive consumption add to the quality of our lives? Does it satisfy our deepest longings? (...) To the contrary, the consumer economy is designed to multiply our dissatisfactions and dependencies. (Orr, 2002, p. 176)

In the second place, for several reasons, this vision of well-being is environmentally and socially unsustainable (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008). This model of well-being is unethical if we wish to respect certain elementary principles of fairness, because it is impossible that all the habitants of this planet can live according to it (Manzini, 2006). Today, 20% of the world population, which lives according to this model, consumes 80% of the physical resources of the planet (Kazazian, 2003; Manzini, 2005).

In fact, if all the inhabitants of the earth really sought this type of well-being in the same way (as is their sacrosanct right, since this is what others do and what is daily promised to them), there would be a huge catastrophe: an ecological one, if they succeeded and a social one if they didn't. Or, most probably, an explosive mixture of the two. (Manzini, 2006, p.2)

This impossibility makes us face the fallacy of the ideology of continuous growth in production and consumption (Walker, 2010). Our system of production and consumption is linear: extraction to production to distribution to consumption to

disposal (Leonard, 2008). How can we run a linear continuous growth in a finite planet? It is illogical and irrational.

Acknowledging the social and environmental impossibility of continuous economic growth entails us to rethink our own concept of development, one of the main aspects of our system of beliefs. The modern model of development has been conceived as a linear process involving largely economic factors (UNESCO, 2009):

What is striking in most theories of development (...) is the assumption that development refers to a process that is *linear* (i.e. moving on a straight path from point A to point B) and *evolutionary* (i.e. progressing from a less developed or lower, 'primitive' or 'traditional', level to a more developed and higher, 'advanced' or 'modern', level). (p. 191-192)

The concept of *sustainable development* was introduced in 1987 by the Brundtland Report – also known as *Our Common Future*, a document prepared by UN Commission on Environment and Development (UNCED) –, denoting a form of growth that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (UNESCO, 2009). Vezzoli and Manzini (2008) explain its importance:

It has pinpointed the impossibility of continuing with the currently indisputable idea of development, unique development without adjectives. And not only are other forms of development possible, but there is a dire need for them. (p. 5)

As we have already seen, development can take multiple forms, as many as there are different cultures in this planet. That is the reason why UNESCO (2009) conceives cultural diversity as a key element of sustainable development.

Cultural diversity has an important – though often underestimated – role to play in addressing current ecological challenges and ensuring environmental sustainability. Cultural factors influence consumption behavior, values related to environmental stewardship and the ways in which we interact with nature. (UNESCO, 2009a, p.26)

Each culture develops in striving toward the good life, in line with its conception of well-being. Every culture and every age have produced images and ideas of flourishing, from the ancient Greeks, to great leaders like Gandhi and Mandela (Ehrenfeld, 2008; Walker, 2010). All those images summon us to “shift back to the flourishing fullness of ‘Being’ from its impoverished modern form of ‘having’” (Ehrenfeld, 2008, p.6). Therefore, Ehrenfeld defines sustainability as “the possibility that human and other life will flourish on the planet forever”.

Going back to the questions: What do we intend to sustain?

Our capacity to flourish.

What will it require from us?

The problem is not how to produce ecologically benign products for the consumer economy, but how to make decent communities in which people grow to be responsible citizens and whole people who do not confuse what they have with who they are. (Orr, 2002, p. 27)

Vezzoli & Manzini (2008) state that creating sustainability asks for a drastic rethinking of our conception of well-being. This conception is a “human construction of the mind, thus it is replaceable” (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008, p. 15).

Going back to the concept of *design*:

Conceiving and proposing products, services and lifestyles, designers play an important role and consequently have an equally important responsibility in generating social expectations in terms of wellbeing. Given the evident un-sustainability of the ideas of wellbeing that have been dominant until now, and that design as a whole collaborated to consolidate and diffuse, it is clear that the first ethical move that designers have to make is to find a new and (hopefully) sustainable idea of well-being. (Manzini, 2006, p.3)

For Ehrenfeld, “sustainability will come only by deliberately addressing the systemic conditions that underlie cultural behavior” (2008, p. 66). Moreover, Ehrenfeld says that sustainability “demands a discontinuous leap from the existing basis of cultural action”. That is a difficult task, because of our total immersion in this culture.

After all, that is what culture is: the ocean we all swim in and cannot sense ordinarily. Unlike fish, however, we can become conscious of deep structures that drive our routines by stepping outside of them and, with considerable effort, change them. (Ehrenfeld, 2008, p.20)

Sustainability is nothing less than rethinking and remaking our presence in the world. Since sustainability is a cultural phenomenon, we can take inspiration from other cultures and traditions. Walker (2010) argues: “the teachings of the traditional wisdoms represent many essential considerations for sustainability”. The world’s major philosophical and spiritual traditions place emphasis on ‘being’ – living fully in the present.

Orr (2002) argues that “we have important things to relearn about the arts of longevity what is now called “sustainability”— from earlier cultures and other societies”, such as some Native American cultures. For Orr, many of those cultures that appear to us as quaintly archaic could offer clues about how the human presence may, under some conditions, be sustained.

The history of settled people in many places reveals the fact that culture and the ecology of particular places have often been joined together with great intelligence and skill. The results, however imperfect, are habitats in which culture and nature have flourished together over many generations. (Orr, 2002, p.7)

However, Orr warns that this “is not an argument to return to some mythic condition of ecological innocence. No such place ever existed.” As already stated, no culture is ideal.

#### **2.1.4 Traditional cultures**

...étant bien entendu qu'il est devenu très difficile de parler de cultures totalement différentes parce que la plupart de celles qui existent dans le monde, elles sont déjà contaminées par la nôtre. (Levi-Strauss, in Beurenaut & Bodanzky, 1991)

From the western point of view, non-western cultures have been seen as ‘traditional’, and ‘traditional’ has been conceived as a counterpoint to modern and ‘civilized’. Consequently, ‘traditional’ social groups have been stereotyped as fixed in the past, primitive and unable to change (Rovine, 2009). “Stereotyping is a way of demarcating one group from an alien ‘other’ and implicitly asserting its superiority” (UNESCO, 2009, p.41).

Since the term ‘traditional’ denotes a mind set of modern western societies, many prefer the terms ‘local’, ‘indigenous’, or ‘settled’ (using Orr’s term). “On this matter, few persons agree. Or to be more precise, everyone recognizes that existing terms are for one reason or another unsatisfactory” (Nakashima & Roué, 2002).

Arruda (1999) explains that in Brazil, due to the lack of a more appropriate term, the notion of ‘traditional societies’ is used to refer to some social groups, relatively isolated from the urban centers, whose lifestyles are characterized by social cooperation and sustained interaction with the natural milieu. This notion comprises indigenous, non-indigenous, and mixed descent populations.

An important element in the relation between traditional populations and nature is the notion of ‘territory’, which can be defined as a portion of land which a particular society claims as its own, and grants to all or a part of its members stable rights of access, control and use for all or part of the natural resources located there, that they desire or are capable of utilizing (Diegues, 1998, p.40)

A relevant aspect of the definition of ‘traditional cultures’ is the existence of systems of management of natural resources characterized by respect for natural processes, and their utilization within the capacity for recovery of the species of plants and animals affected. These traditional systems of management are not only forms of economic exploitation of natural resources, but also reveal the existence of a complex knowledge, acquired by oral tradition from the elders, which consists of myths and symbols that lead to the maintenance and sustainable use of natural ecosystems. (Diegues, 1998, p.42)

It is important to note that we are not using the term ‘traditional culture’ to each and every indigenous culture. This study does not use this term for peoples who built spectacular monuments, such as pyramids. On the contrary, we are regarding cultures that seldom exceed what can be called human scale and have persisted mostly, but not exclusively, on local resources (Orr, 2002).

In this study, the term ‘traditional’ is used to refer to communities characterized by local economy and family solidarity, living in sustained interaction and adaptation with particular ecosystems, whose extensive knowledge of the natural milieu is a product of resource-based livelihoods extending across many generations (Arruda, 1999). In addition, these populations have a self-identification or identification by others as belonging to a distinct culture (Diegues, 1998).

Moreover, these people cannot be idealized as ‘ecologically noble’ (Adams, 2003). Traditional settled cultures have maintained a sustainable interaction with their milieu – without having the concept ‘ecology’ in mind – because to do otherwise would bring ruin, famine, and social disintegration (Orr, 2002). Dowie (in Clark, 2009) states that the primary motivation for protecting the natural health of their territory is food security. “It’s not some romantic notion about wilderness” (Dowie, in Clark, 2009).

Traditional social groups, despite not belonging to the modern culture, have been affected by modernity due to globalization.

Through the media, globalization conveys an often seductive image of modernity and provides a template for collective ambitions (...) Most local communities worldwide have been exposed to some extent to the images and consumer practices typical of this Western paradigm, which has now impacted on almost all countries, irrespective of culture, religion, social system and political regime (Nyamjoh & Warnier, 2007, in UNESCO, 2009).



## 2.2 GUARAQUEÇABA

Guaraqueçaba is a coastal municipality in the state of Paraná, in the Southern Region of Brazil.<sup>1</sup> The area comprises a high diversity of habitats and ecosystems, ranging from mangroves, marine continental islands, moist lowland forest and marshes to moist highlands, and mountain forests. (Arroyo, 2003; Freiberg, 1994). It has approximately 8000 inhabitants scattered on 57 small communities throughout several islands, estuaries and the countryside. Most of the inhabitants belong to Caiçara culture (explained in the next section), but there are also a small indigenous Guarani population and other peasants that moved to the region last century. Basically, the Caiçara population is divided in two major groups: the countryside farming communities and the islands and estuaries fishing communities (Novaes, 2007). This study will focus on the islands' fishing communities.

Due to several factors such as relative politico-geographic isolation, difficult access and low demographic density, the region of Guaraqueçaba is the largest remnant of the precious Atlantic Forest (Pedroso-Júnior & Sato, 2005) – see image 2. This tropical and subtropical rainforest once stretched along Brazil's Atlantic coast. Having been isolated from other major rainforest blocks in South America for thousands of years, the Atlantic Forest has extremely high levels of diversity and endemism (Conservation International [CI], 2007; UNESCO, 2010). After centuries of human use, this forest has been reduced to only eight percent of its original size; nevertheless it is still among the biologically richest and most diverse forests in the world (CI, 2007; The Nature Conservancy [TNC], 2010). Although it is just a small fraction of the size of the Amazon rainforest, the Atlantic Forest still harbors a range of biological diversity similar to that of the Amazon (TNC, 2010). About 55% of Guaraqueçaba's forest tree species, 75% of its other plants, 40% of the mammals and 50% of the birds are found nowhere else on Earth (Freiberg, 1994; TNC, 2010). For these reasons, the natural environment of Guaraqueçaba is one of the highest priorities for conservation in the planet (CI, 2007; Freiberg, 1994; TNC, 2010; UNESCO, 2010).

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1. Guaraqueçaba is only 170km far from Curitiba, the capital of Paraná. Curitiba is a city of nearly 3 million inhabitants that is praised as a reference of urban planning and sustainable development. Among the city many awards are the 1990 United Nations Environmental Award, 2001 World Technology Award for Transportation, and 2010 Globe Sustainable City Award. The 2010 World Mayors Summit on Climate honoured Curitiba as the greenest city in Latin America. The location of Guaraqueçaba was thus a key factor to the ideals of environmental sustainability that affected its area..

## BIOMES IN BRAZIL

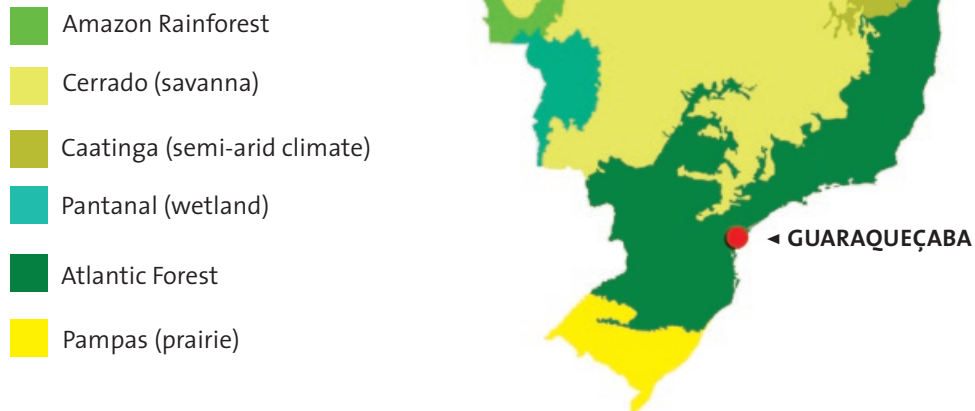


FIGURE 1: Location of Guaraqueçaba in the map of Brazil (Mapa de Biomas do Brasil - IGBE, 2004).



FIGURE 2: Map of Guaraqueçaba EPA, (adapted from SPVS, n.d.)

### 2.2.1 The Caiçaras

Caiçara is the name given to the traditional population living within the Atlantic Forest, along Brazil's south and southeast coast, of mixed aboriginal and European descent. Caiçaras are considered by Brazilian law as a non-indigenous traditional population – Brazilian government considers as indigenous only relatively 'pure' populations – therefore there are no reservations to protect their territory (Diegues & Arruda; 2001).

The Atlantic Forest was the first Brazilian biome to be settled by European colonists in the sixteenth century (Adams, 2003; Diegues, 1998). The development of Caiçara culture is closely tied to the history of European occupation of the Brazilian southeastern coast. From the contact between Tupi-Guarani aboriginal peoples and the European colonists a new culture has emerged (Sanches, 2001). The identity-formation process of the Caiçara merged several cultural features of the Tupi-Guarani – such as fishing, manioc cultivation and use of native plants – with Portuguese ones – such as language, Roman Catholic religious practices and folklore (Adams, 2003). The Caiçara culture continues an important indigenous heritage, having evolved over the past five centuries in response to environmental changes associated with the use of the Atlantic Forest (Sanches, 2001). Geographical features greatly limited the size and

**IMAGE 2:** Device to make manioc flour, in Barbados village. **IMAGE 3:** Men pull a fishing net in Peças village. **IMAGE 4:** Fisherman crafts a fishing net. **IMAGE 5:** A handicraft sieve made with liana.







One-trunk canoe: a caiçara icon. **IMAGE 6:** The making of a caiçara canoe from one tree trunk. **IMAGE 7:** Side view of a caiçara canoe. **IMAGE 8:** A fisherman in a one-trunk caiçara canoe.



Caiçara fandango. **IMAGE 9:** Master Leonildo Pereira playing a rebec. **IMAGE 10:** A fandango ball in Superagüi Island. **IMAGE 11:** Some fandango instruments – rebecs and guitars – displayed for sale at the cooperative store. **IMAGE 12:** Clogs to dance fandango, at the cooperative store.

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**Caiçara Fandango** is a festivity, a dance and a music genre entirely associated with the Caiçara way of life. Its practice has always been connected to the organization of voluntary collective work, in activities such as plowing, harvesting, pulling fishing nets and construction. In recompense for the voluntary cooperation, the organizer used to host a Fandango ball – with music, dance and abundant food. Fandango balls used to be the main entertainment and social occasion in the Caiçara communities (Museu Vivo do Fandango [MVF], [www.museuvivodofandango.com.br](http://www.museuvivodofandango.com.br)). Fandango musical instruments are locally hand-made and constitute an important craft tradition. A fandango master is a luthier and also a musician (Renato Caiçara & Leonildo Pereira, personal communication, September 22, 2010). With the disruptions in the Caiçara way of life, Caiçara fandango had been abandoned in many communities. Notwithstanding, this tradition is beginning to regain vigor. (MVF; Renato Caiçara; Rodrigo Castro, personal communication, October, 18, 2010).

mobility of Caiçara communities, contributing to their isolation. The high altitudes of the coastal mountain range forced the Caiçaras to settle in small coastal plains and piedmonts. Ever since the sixteenth century, Caiçaras have played a peripheral economic and political role in the Brazilian society dynamics (Adams, 2003). For a long period, Caiçara communities in Guaraqueçaba remained considerably isolated from urban centers (Marangon & Agudelo, 2004).

Relative geographic isolation and a traditional way of life, characterized by limited accumulation of capital and dependency on the market economy, and by importance of kinship relations and of manual technologies with a small impact on nature, have ensured that their areas of the Atlantic Forest have been kept relatively well preserved. (Diegues, 1998, p. 95)

Caiçara livelihood depended on the region natural resources, through slash and burn agriculture, subsistence hunting, extractives, artisanal fishing and handicraft. These people have an intimate relation with the Atlantic Forest, from which they extract wood for their canoes and constructions, fishing equipment, work implements, utensils, medication, etc. (Diegues, 1998). Craft is clearly divided between men and women: musical instruments, tools, canoes and fishing equipment are made by men, while household utensils and medication are made by women (Diegues, 2004).

Farming has always been a core activity, structuring household organization and its network of social relationship (Sanches, 2001). Caiçara communities did not have a defined social class structure. Each family was a unity of production and consumption, and was articulated to other families through cooperation and reciprocity, characterized by voluntary collective work (called *mutirão* and *puxirão*), labor exchange (*troca-dia*), and local festivities (Caiçara *fandango*) (Adams, 2003; Arruda, 1999).

Caiçara communities are characterized by a notion of space occupation different from the urban one (Diegues, 1998). Only the dwelling place was taken as private property, the rest of their territory was held communally.

These common property arrangements usually exist in communities with a strong dependency on the use of renewable natural resources to ensure their subsistence, and which have a low population density and relatively limited links to the market. Extensive kinship webs permeate these arrangements, by mutual aid, and social norms and values that privilege intra-group solidarity. (Diegues, 1998, p. 42)

Caiçara culture, like any other culture, cannot be considered static. It changes and evolves in response to environmental challenges and with the contact with other populations and cultures. From the second half of the XX century, many changes

took place in Guaraqueçaba: the arrival of fishing motorboats and the construction of a road connecting Guaraqueçaba to other urban centers<sup>2</sup>, the introduction of buffalo ranching, the establishing of palm heart industries, etc. (Adams, 2003; Cornetta, 2007; Marangon & Agudelo, 2004; Olmos et al., 2007). The arrival of the motorboats modified the lifestyles of the islands and estuarine communities. The motorboats allowed the development of commercial fishing and also facilitated the contact with the continent and urban centers<sup>3</sup>. As a result, fishing could generate a surplus that could be sold to urban centers. Until then, Caiçaras could be considered mainly as shifting cultivators and, secondarily, as canoe fishermen. Adams explains:

As male laborers shifted to fishing, agriculture was partially or totally abandoned. Thus, Caiçara way of life was reorganized and the sea acquired a significant new status in their culture. (2003, p. 24)

In addition, the contact with the continent and the fishing surplus allowed them to buy a few industrialized goods. Before, they had to make themselves virtually all of their objects. In informal conversations, some islanders told me that, until the 1970's, both men and women used to wear tunics, because they did not have access to industrialized fabrics.

The focus of this study is the islands' fishing communities. However, it is important to describe the drastic changes that happened in the countryside – which triggered the environmental protection movement and the disruption of Caiçara way of life. In the 1970's, Paraná Government decided to promote the region economic development by offering fiscal incentives to attract new industries (Cornetta, 2005; Marangon & Agudelo, 2004; Olmos et al., 2007). Mainly, three activities developed in Guaraqueçaba: logging, palm heart processing and buffalo ranching. The social effects of non-native Asian buffalo ranching were severe. The fiscal incentives attracted people from other regions who took possession of huge amounts of land. Great part of these areas was communal territories of Caiçara populations (Marangon & Agudelo, 2004). Although they had informal rights over their land most Caiçaras did not have registered legal property (Adams, 2003).

The informal character of 'collective property' made these lands easy targets for real estate speculation and thus traditional inhabitants were the first to be victims of land grabs. (Diegues, 1998, p.42)

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2. It is still a dirt road nowadays.

3. Boats are still the only form of transport to most of the communities of Guaraqueçaba. The transportation infrastructure is still very precarious nowadays.

The local population suffered because the region had few economical alternatives for them and the government did not give assistance to the Caiçara communities (Olmos et al., 2007). A great number of Caiçara farmers, expropriated from their lands migrated to estuarine communities and adopted fishing as their main activity (Marangon & Agudelo, 2004). All those economic changes also produced significant environmental damages:

Buffalo ranching, introduced when a road penetrated the region in the 1970's, has caused extensive forest clearing for pastures. Unsustainable extractive activities such as logging, heart-of-palm gathering, over fishing, and hunting were eroding the resource base of Guaraqueçaba's rich forests. (The Nature Conservancy, 2008)

The realization that we were about to be deprived of the last large continuous area of Atlantic Forest prompted some policies for environmental protection.

No single tropical forest on Earth has come closer to complete destruction than Brazil's Atlantic Forest. (Sociedade de Pesquisa em Vida Selvagem [SPVS], 2011)

### **2.2.2 Guaraqueçaba Environmental Protection Area**

In order to protect Guaraqueçaba's ecosystems, the Environmental Protection Area (EPA) of Guaraqueçaba was created in 1985 under the Law Decree n° 90.883/85 – a 313,234-hectare tract of the best-preserved continuous Atlantic Forest in Brazil. (Agudelo & Maragon, 2006; Arroyo, 2003). The Guaraqueçaba EPA is a conservation unit that regulates the direct use of the natural resources for economic gain, in an attempt to guarantee low impacts to the environment. It is composed of a series of protection areas with different protection categories – ranging from conservation to strict preservation – and includes areas where people live and work (Arroyo, 2003). The preservation areas inside the Guaraqueçaba EPA are: Superagüi National Park, a federal Ecological Station, and several private nature reserves supported by companies like General Motors, Chevron and American Electric Power (Arroyo, 2003; TNC, 2008)

Superagüi National Park was created in 1989, comprising the islands of Peças and Superagüi, with a total area of 33,988 ha (Pedroso-Júnior & Sato, 2005). A national park is the most restrictive protection category. In other words, it means integral nature preservation. The two islands presently count with 15 small Caiçara communities, and are the focus of this study. The communities, the small villages themselves, are not part of the park. However, all their surrounds are – areas upon which their livelihood depends. These communities were not consulted when the park was established.

Creating the Superagü National Park and the local conservation unit, far from being an idea of the residents, happened basically as a response to pressure exerted by environmental organizations and state agencies concerned with preserving threatened ecosystems. (Pedroso-Júnior & Sato, 2005, p. 125)

No one can deny the great importance of protecting Guaraqueçaba's ecosystems. Notwithstanding, there is a conceptual problem here. The ideology of conservationism and the creation of conservation units have been influenced by the concept that to be conserved, nature must be protected from human hands<sup>4</sup> (Novaes, 2007). It conceives nature as something exterior to the human being and the latter as being exterior to nature (Arruda, 1999). This ideology does not fit for the Brazilian reality, where the best-preserved natural areas have been inhabited by traditional or aboriginal populations for centuries (Diegues, 1998; Novaes; Pedroso-Júnior & Sato, 2005). These human groups lived in direct contact with nature, developing specific lifestyles that depended on renewable natural resources, showing a permanent interaction between nature and culture.

The development of any culture arises from the constant interplay between the environment and human needs. (UNESCO, 2009, p.203).

In fact, humans have intervened in nature throughout history and what appears to us as the natural world today is a world that has absorbed these interventions. Nonetheless, what differentiates today's natural world from the social world is the degree of cause and effect that arises as a result of human intervention. (Margolin, 2010, p. 71)

The idea of nature divorced from culture is a construction that tells a lot about the western modern culture itself and how the modern culture relates to the environment (Nakashima & Roué, 2002). In the modern culture, two forms of representation of nature coexist. First, there is the myth of untouched nature or wilderness, which presupposes the incompatibility between the actions of any human group and the conservation of nature. The second view is the representation of forests as 'natural resources', which is based on the idea that nature only has meaning when it is transformed into commodities – in the name of economical development (Diegues, 1998; Marangon & Agudelo, 2004).

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4. Dowie (in Clark, 2009) explains:

This whole model of conservation began here in Yosemite [USA] in the middle of the 19th Century, which was at the time occupied by Lewach Indians. And John Muir and the other people who were inspired to create a national park where Yosemite is, were not impressed with the Indians. In fact, Muir was revolted by them, and asked that they be removed from the Park and they were. That happened again in Yellowstone and several other American parks around the country. That became known as the Yosemite model of conservation, and was exported by the organizations that now dominate global conservation, all of which are American organizations.



In both of these cases, paradoxically, the forest should be uninhabited, which denies the existence of innumerable cultures and societies that live in the forest. (Diegues, 1998, p.26).

The principles of conservation are based on the natural sciences (Marangon & Agudelo, 2004). Arruda (1999) stated that, as members of the modern industrial civilization, we assume that we have the most correct view because it is based on rational reasoning and on scientific principles. We see environmental preservation as part of the solution to climate change and we presume that we know what has to be preserved and how to do it.

Science exerts a powerful influence on our daily lives, our interactions with the environment, our value systems and worldview. However, it is just one knowledge system amongst many. Other knowledge systems, many of them embedded in a remarkable diversity of cultures and sustaining a broad spectrum of ways of life, constitute a rich and diverse intellectual heritage whose importance for attaining international development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, continues to be underestimated. (Matsuura, as cited in UNESCO, 2009, p.209-210)

When traditional knowledge of local environments is considered inferior to scientific knowledge, native populations are not listened. Consequently, they do not take part on the decision-making of the conservation units. For the management of the Guaraqueçaba EPA, the government and environmental NGOs have not relied on the expertise of the people that had preserved these ecosystems for centuries, excluding the Caiçaras from the conservation process (Ostrensky & Ângelo, 2006). Their knowledge and culture have often been seen as backward and primitive.

According to the law, Brazilian EPAs should protect nature and the culture of local traditional populations, improving the life quality of the latter (Dumora, 2010; Marangon & Agudelo, 2004). However, the manner the conservation policies have been put in practice is quite different. “Public policies defined for the area had a strong ecological basis and a weak local social understanding” (Agudelo & Maragon; 2006). Guaraqueçaba EPA was established without regard for the real needs of local communities in terms of natural resources, inherent to their way of life (Arruda, 1999; Pedroso-Júnior & Sato, 2005). That has created a contradiction: on one hand the law says that the traditional cultures should be preserved, on the other, the law restricted the traditional practices of use of the natural resources – the backbone of Caiçara culture. Consequently, in the name of nature protection, the culture has been damaged (Arruda, Marangon & Agudelo, Pedroso-Júnior & Sato).

### 2.2.3 Social consequences of the Environmental Protection

For Caiçaras, as stated by Marangon & Agudelo (2004), natural resources are an integral part of their culture. Between Caiçaras and their cultural environment – their territory – there is an ecological relation. Environment, for these people, is a fundamental reference in which are imprinted all the traces of their personal and collective history. In striving to survive, human beings have intervened in nature and have designed objects. These interventions and objects reveal a human group's way of living, making and thinking. They have created customs, knowledge, myths, rituals, and celebrations that are all signs of their particular relation with the territory of their culture. Depriving human beings of these signs causes anguish, since people can no longer recognize the surrounding world and make sense of their experience. That is the reason why depriving Caiçaras of their ancient practices was so distressing. For an impoverished population, lacking economical alternatives and governmental assistance, the creation of the conservation units has had a devastating effect. Nowadays Guaraqueçaba has one of the three worst Human Development Index (HDI) in the State of Paraná – among 399 municipalities (Mazziotti, 2011; Olmos et al., 2007).

HDI PARANÁ 2005	HDI GUARAQUEÇABA 2000
0.82	0.659

TABLE 1: Comparison between the HDIs of Guaraqueçaba and the State of Paraná (Wikipedia)

The law restricted traditional subsistence practices without defining alternatives to sustain locals (Marangon & Agudelo, 2004). As a result, we saw a criminalization of many current and fundamental subsistence activities (Arruda, 1999; Marangon & Agudelo). The Caiçaras have been treated many times as criminals for practicing their traditions. Lang (2009) tells the story of a villager “who was arrested at gun point and thrown in jail for eleven days for cutting down trees to repair his mother's house”. I have heard several stories like this during my fieldwork<sup>5</sup>. Adams describes the situation:

(...) governments have left the Caiçaras within protected areas undisturbed, although prohibiting their subsistence activities (primarily swidden agriculture and hunting). Overall, this ambiguous situation has left many families in an unbearable situation, where cases have been reported of households being searched by forest wardens checking cooking pans for evidence of illegal game concoctions. (Adams, 2003, p.20)

It is important to understand how the Caiçaras felt about this distressing situation.

5. To understand this situation, there is a PBS documentary film *Frontline: The Carbon Hunters* available in: <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/carbonwatch/2010/05/the-carbon-hunters.html>

Antônio Castanho, a Caiçara elder, has told:

Eu me sento naquela churrasqueira e me ponho a pensar como era antigamente. E até chego a chorar, de pensar na fartura que era a minha casa e a falta que é hoje. Antes a gente não precisava do dinheiro, tinha tudo. Hoje a gente precisa e não tem nada. Tudo que a gente precisava, tirava da roça e do mato. Tudo que precisamos hoje, temos que tirar da pesca: assim não tem o que agüente. (in Siqueira, Mellinger & Silva, 2009, p.5)

*I sit by that fireplace barbeque grill and start to think about how things used to be. And I even cry when I think about the abundance my house once had and the scarcity it has now. Before, we didn't need money, we had everything. Now that we need we don't have anything. Everything we needed we got from crops and from the woods. All we need today, we have to get from fishing, there is no way to sustain that.*

On the islands, for many years, the only source of income has been small-scale fishing. But even with all the conservationist measures, the fishes are disappearing around Superagüi National Park. Although overfishing has contributed to this situation, there are other factors that explain the disappearing. Guaraqueçaba EPA is located very close to an important exportation harbor, Paranaguá. During the last decade, two major oil spills have occurred in Paranaguá bay, contaminating the region waters (Chueire Jr., 2008).

For many communities, the constraints on the use of natural resources are so restrictive that part of the population migrates in order to make their living elsewhere, increasing unemployment and the slums in urban areas (Diegues, 1998). Agudelo & Maragon (2006) showed that the urban population in the Town of Guaraqueçaba has grown 205% in two decades. Caiçaras also migrate from the rural areas and islands to nearby towns, arriving in the cities without the skills and defenses to live in the urban environment (Lang, 2009). Carlos Machado, the mayor of Antonina – the nearest town – stated:

Families have been torn apart by violence, drugs and alcoholism. Directly or indirectly it was through these conservation projects that the population came here and created a ring of poverty around our city causing a really big social problem here. (in Lang, 2009)

The conservation is by no means the only source of poverty. As already mentioned, the region had been abandoned by public services for a long time. However, the local population blames IBAMA – Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources – and environmental NGOs for all their privations (Olmos et al., 2007). While the focus of anger is the environmental preservation, structural local problems, such as political clientelism, remain out of sight (Novaes, 2007). On the other hand, authoritarian and poorly democratic approaches, lead by IBAMA and environmental NGOs, resulted in exasperation. For the Caiçara local population, IBAMA is only able to say “you cannot” (several personal communications with islanders, between

19/09/2010 and 27/09/2010) – for example, *you cannot hunt, you cannot cut wood, you cannot build, you cannot extract liana*. This *modus operandi* infuriates native people. Pedroso-Júnior and Sato (2005) say that the local population perceives themselves as more and more restricted in what they can do and where they can go.

At the same time, these people feel neglected in comparison to the animals and plants of the region. They also interpret environmental law as casting they themselves in the role of environmental enemies while overlooking their part in helping to maintain the current conservational status of the region. (Pedroso-Júnior & Sato, 2005, p.124).

### 2.3. PREDICAMENTS

Using Mark Dowie's terms, it is a "good guy versus good guy story". "You've got to say that people who are trying to preserve biological diversity and endangered species around the world are on a good mission" (Dowie, in Clark, 2009).

Notwithstanding, the conservationists' authoritarian methods achieved the feat of making an enemy of their best potential ally – the Caiçara population (Novaes, 2007). Because of their long-time relation with their territory, Caiçaras retain a huge body of empirical knowledge which can be joined to scientific knowledge, resulting in a much more effective conservation (Novaes, 2007).

As indigenous peoples retain within their knowledge systems an inter-generational memory of fluctuations, trends and exceptional events in relation to the local environment, they can contribute importantly to understanding processes of change, whether these might be long-term, global transformation processes or circumscribed local events. (Nakashima & Roué, 2002, p.10)

Presently, conservationists and Caiçaras remain on opposite sides due to a lack of dialogue. "Initiatives of dialogue between all actors involved seem to have failed due to inability of negotiations and/or lack of understanding about the other needs and expectations" (Agudelo & Maragon, 2006).

It is important to note that Guaraqueçaba is the focus of this study but also an illustrative case. The same kind of conflict has been happening all over the world.

It's no secret that millions of native peoples around the world have been pushed off their land to make room for big oil, big metal, big timber, and big agriculture. But few people realize that the same thing has happened for a much nobler cause: land and wildlife conservation. (...) I visited with tribal members on three continents that were grappling with the consequences of Western conservation and found an alarming similarity among the stories I heard. (Dowie, 2005)

Dowie calls these populations 'soft evicted' to give place to nature preserves as *conservation refugees*. And often these people declare themselves *enemies of conservation*. Considerable effort is now needed to restore trust between local populations and governmental authorities and environmental institutions. "This can only be done through results reflected in the real improvement of services and income generation" (Agudelo & Maragon, 2006). In other words, conflict will continue while native populations remain distressed and destitute.

### **2.3.1 Environmental x social concerns**

This case illustrates a confrontation between social and environmental concerns. In theory, the three pillars of sustainable development are: environmental, social and economic (UNESCO, 2009a). It means that sustainable development aims to combine economical growth with social justice and environmental preservation (Kazazian, 2003). Notwithstanding, can the pursuit of one pillar damage other pillars?

In principle, all people concerned with sustainability care about the environment and about social justice. Paul Hawken (2007) regards the organizations dedicated to preserving the environment and fostering social justice as the largest movement on earth. Andrés Edwards (2005) names this movement as the *Sustainability Revolution*. For him, one of the characteristics of this movement is the remarkable similarities among sustainability groups in intentions and objectives. In practice, we see cases such as Guaraqueçaba, in which the pursuit for preserving the environment has damaged the social and economic pillars of local populations. In practice, the three pillars of sustainable development have been addressed separately. Very often the focus of discussions and interest about sustainability remain in the field of the environment. We came to a narrower concept called environmental sustainability.

The term environmental sustainability refers to systemic conditions where neither on planetary nor on a regional level do human activities disturb the natural cycles more than the planetary resilience allows, and at the same time do not impoverish the natural capital that has to be shared with future generations. (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008, p. 6)

However, can we pursue environmental sustainability only, and disregard the cultural, economic and social aspects? Can policies that exclude the local native populations really promote environmental sustainability? There is no doubt that this discussion surpasses the scope of this study. There are several articles that examine the negative consequences of neglecting local native populations for the conservation goals themselves (Agudelo & Maragon, 2006; Arruda, 1999; Diegues, 1998; Dumora, 2010; Marangon & Agudelo, 2004; Novaes, 2007; Pedroso-Júnior & Sato, 2005; UNESCO, 2009). In these articles, we see that authoritarian approaches to environmental conservation may, in fact, damage some ecosystems.

This study will glance at just one aspect of this question, relative to the ecological footprint, the consumption of resources. Traditional people sustain themselves mostly on the resources of their territory. When the access to these resources is denied – even with very good environmental intentions – the sustainable lifestyle is disrupted. Nowadays, in the islands of Guaraqueçaba EPA, almost all the food comes from elsewhere. In some communities, such as Peças and Superagüi, most of the utensils come from elsewhere and are industrialized. All that means transportation and waste, and consequently, environmental damage. As stated by Orr (2002, p.15), “the level of environmental destruction has risen with the volume of stuff consumed and with the distance it is transported”. Caiçaras are a small population, so we may think that their footprint increase is not alarming. Notwithstanding, Dowie (2005) affirms that there are at least 10 million people in similar situation around the globe.

If we address only the economic problem – the impoverishment of Caiçara communities – through income generation, the Caiçaras will be given money to consume food and goods from elsewhere. It will not support the region sustainable development. On the other hand, if we do not address the destitution of some Caiçara communities, villagers will continue to move to urban areas – often into slums. And that causes lots of other environmental and social problems (Lang, 2009). These examples illustrate that supporting environmental sustainability is not only about preserving the natural environment, but also about preserving the lifestyles of traditional people and supporting local economy. That is the reason why even if we choose to pursue the environmental sustainability only, it cannot be achieved without addressing the social and economic dimensions.

Something has to amalgamate the three pillars of sustainable development and allow their integration. UNESCO (2009) affirms that this bond is cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is understood as a dynamic process within which cultural change can best be

managed through intercultural dialogue and sensitivity to cultural contexts. Culture cannot be understood as a separate fourth pillar, rather it is a crosscutting dimension:

Acknowledgement of cultural diversity adds a crucial dimension to strategies that view sustainability as facilitating the integration of the economic pillar of development with its social and environmental pillars. In this sense, cultural diversity can be seen as a key crosscutting dimension of sustainable development. (UNESCO, 2009a, p.25)

### 2.3.2 Shortcomings of doing good

Just as promoting environmental sustainability is not obvious – certain proposed ‘solutions’ turn out to generate even more problems when put in practice – neither is fighting social injustice. Some people work with poor and marginalized communities with the intention of fighting poverty and promoting social justice. They see unacceptable life conditions and want to collaborate on changing them, in other words, they wish to do good. Can the wish to do good really do good? The question in this study is not the goals and intentions – we all agree about promoting social justice and environmental sustainability. The question here is about the means, because doing good can take many different forms. We can act with conviction that we are doing good for a community and our agency ends up being harmful to the people we were trying to help. These risks are even bigger when we are working with different cultures, because ethical principles vary from one culture to another (Fry, 2006).

Frequently poverty is perceived as a lack of material resources or basic social services. As a result, fighting poverty takes the form of promoting the economical development of destitute communities. This approach has its drawbacks. UNESCO argues that very often the ideology of development has tended to damage the social fabric and foundations of communities that received ‘development aid’. “Examples abound of well-intended but inappropriate development responses by international NGOs” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 192) and their consequences can be dramatic.

The term *development* entered the lexicon of international relations in 1949 (Eades, 2002; UNESCO, 2009), as synonymous with Western-style modernization. Development assistance, within this worldview, has emphasized economic growth at the macro level, and some form of income generation at the micro level, as the main key to eradicating poverty (Eades, 2002). “Much development planning has consequently been inspired by a vision of history as a linear evolution, and conceived of as a way of *catching up* with *modernity*” (Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002, p.1-2).



Experience of many development agencies has showed that attempts of developing indigenous cultures using western values are unfruitful and unsustainable (Luttrell & Quiroz, 2009; SDC, 2010; UNESCO, 2009; World Bank, 2009). This awareness implies efforts to understand and respect cultural specificities, identities, values and worldviews. By failing to take account of cultural diversity, development strategies risk perpetuating the shortcomings they are supposed to remedy.

It has been argued that certain development policies have impaired the capacity of local cultures to contribute to the well-being of their communities by imposing a vision of the world dictated by economic productivity and by contributing to the dissemination of a psychology of 'cultural inferiority' (UNESCO, 2009, p. 192)

Poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that cannot be understood only in economical terms. Economic prosperity is no more than one of the means to enhance lives of people. "Even as a means, merely enhancing average economic opulence can be quite inefficient in the pursuit of the really valuable ends" (Sen, 1990, p.42). For Sen (1999) what the poor are denied is, ultimately, their human fulfillment. They are denied the freedom to fulfill themselves as human beings and as citizens, and they are denied the freedom of choice. Moreover, they are denied the conditions necessary to exercise a freedom of choice. Only by addressing those issues we will be able to promote social justice. Social justice cannot be attained if one group only gives aid while the other only receives aid. For Ezio Manzini (2005, 2006), this approach is profoundly disabling.

In the last century the dominant idea, the idea generated and propagated throughout the world by the west, was: "If someone is hungry give them fast food or a tin of ready-to-eat (or, if they can afford it, give them a luxury restaurant)". Whatever you do, give them something that requires no effort, no thought, no knowledge of how to prepare food; something that boosts the economic activities around food preparation. To be more precise, give them something that leads to a reduction in the informal economies of self-production and non-monetary exchange and an increase in the formal economy where, to meet a demand for food, there are other entities (private enterprise or public networks) that produce and deliver the services and products necessary.  
(...) In so doing, it has tended to take away from individuals and communities those skills, abilities and know-how that enabled them in the past to deal with the most diverse aspects of daily life. (Manzini, 2005)

An enabling approach, for Manzini (2006), should enable people "to fulfill their potential, using their own skills and abilities in the best possible way to achieve their desired results". An enabling approach should thus consider people's values and resources, and not only their lacks. "It is (...) essential to see the public not merely as 'the patient' whose well-being commands attention, but also as 'the agent' whose actions can transform society" (Sen, 1999).



## 2.4 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

There is a gradual recognition of the need to acknowledge the central role of people, with their particular aspirations, attitudes, mentality, values, beliefs, spirituality, and sense of the sacred and of happiness, and with their own skills, expertise, and creativity, as a pre-requisite for the success of development programmes. (Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002, p.2)

The concept of development in this study is greatly influenced by the work of Amartya Sen<sup>6</sup>. Particularly by his article *Development as capability expansion* (1990) and his book *Development as freedom* (1999).

Sen (1999) argues that development can be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy, aiming to enhance and enrich the lives that people are able to lead.

Development has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy. Expanding the freedoms that we have reason to value not only makes our lives richer and more unfettered, but also allows us to be fuller social persons. (Sen, 1999, p.14-15)

And this freedom-center understanding of the development process is very much agent-oriented. Free and sustainable agency, Sen states, is a major engine of development. Sen defines it as “what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important” (in Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). In other words, agency is what people can do in line with their conception of the good. People who enjoy high levels of agency are engaged in actions that are congruent with their values (Alkire, 2009). Sen argues that acting freely and being able to choose are directly conducive to well-being<sup>7</sup> (in Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007).

For Sen, the objective of development is to expand capabilities and to support people’s agency. Capabilities are people’s real freedoms to enjoy valuable lives – to lead the kind of life they value and have reason to value (Alkire, 2009; Sen, 1999). The concept *capability* refers to the possibility of people to achieve a result using their own personal resources and the set of solutions they have access to (Manzini, 2006).

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6. Winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economic Science

7. Influenced by Aristotle, Sen (1990) sees quality of life in terms of valued activities and the capability to achieve these activities. For an examination of the relation between Aristotelian approach and capabilities, Sen recommends Martha Nussbaum’s article “Nature, function and capability: Aristotle on political distribution”, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, supplementary volume 1988.

The people have to be seen in this perspective, as being actively involved – given the opportunity – in shaping their own destiny, and not just as passive recipients of fruits of cunning development programs. The state and the society have extensive roles in strengthening and safeguarding human capabilities. This is a supporting role, rather than one of ready-made delivery. (Sen, 1999, p.53)

Having freedom implies being able to choose one kind of life rather than another. Sen explains (1990, 2004), the things that people value doing or being can be quite diverse, varying between different regions and distinct cultural backgrounds. As we have seen, each culture has its own values and ideas of what represents a good life, and has its own supply of resources, skills, beliefs and techniques.

The concept of enhancing the ability of marginalized or destitute people to make choices, to act in line with their values and to determine their own destiny has become known as *empowerment*.

#### **2.4.1. Empowerment**

Empowerment happens when individuals and organized groups are able to imagine their world differently and to realize that vision by changing the relations of power that have been keeping them in poverty. (R.Eyben, IDS, DAC Povnet, 2008)

Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. (World Bank, 2009).

Empowerment involves challenging the forms of oppression which compel millions of people to play a part in their society on terms which are inequitable, or in ways which deny their human rights (Oxfam, in Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007)

Empowerment is necessary when inequality in the distribution of knowledge, power and resources prevents individuals, groups and social classes from improving their own living quality independently. In the cycle of poverty, people are excluded from the decision-making process and don't have autonomy of choice and action (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation [SDC], 2004).

Empowerment, as a guiding principle, is broadly defined by Luttrell and Quiroz (2009) as “a progression that helps people gain control over their own lives and increases the capacity of people to act on issues that they themselves define as important”. An important feature of this approach is regarding individuals and communities as *agents* of their own development. Sen (1999) defines *agent* as someone who acts and

bring about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of their own values and objectives. There is also another important characteristic:

There is a core to the empowerment process which consists of increases in self-confidence and self-esteem, a sense of agency and of “self” in a wider context, and a sense of *dignidad* (being worthy of having a right to respect from others). (Rowlands, 1997, cited by Luttrell & Quiroz).

Since the late 1980s, the concept of empowerment has become prominent in the rhetoric of development (Jupp & Ali, 2010; Luttrell & Quiroz, 2009). The concept empowerment refers to “agency, autonomy, self-direction, self-determination, liberation, participation, mobilization and self-confidence” (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). Empowerment has been seen as a *sine qua non* condition to initiate a virtuous circle out of poverty and spur local development (Paula, 2004; SDC, 2010).

Notwithstanding, empowerment does not make reference to a precise conceptual framework (Le Bossé, 2003). The term has been ascribed to a wide variety of definitions and meanings in various socio-economic and political contexts (Cornwall & Brock, 2005; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Jupp & Ali, 2010). In the 1990s, empowerment was enthusiastically embraced by many development agencies and institutions – such as SDC, World Bank, Care, Oxfam, CIDA, SIDA, etc. (Luttrell & Quiroz, 2009). Although almost all these organizations agree that empowerment is a fundamental aspect of their work, few of these share common definitions and approaches. The definitions above are some examples of dozens of definitions in use nowadays<sup>8</sup>.

Empowerment can be seen both as a process and an outcome. To some, empowerment is a political concept involving the collective struggle of the poor and disadvantaged; to others, it refers to the consciousness of individuals to address issues determining their lives. The wide variety of definitions, approaches and methods of empowerment seems to show a difficulty in translating the guiding ‘philosophical’ principle of empowerment into specific contexts. Again we see similarities of intentions but divergences in the means these intentions are put into practice.

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8. There are some good articles that deal with the multiple definitions, approaches and conceptions of empowerment. Luttrell & Quiroz (2009) summarize the different ways several funding agencies and international NGOs define empowerment and note differences related to seeing empowerment both as a process and an outcome, the emphasis on agency versus structure. Ibrahim & Alkire (2007) provide a list of 29 of the many definitions of empowerment in current use, and also review some of the common definitions of empowerment and identify their commonalities and divergences. Le Bossé (2003) tries to clarify the conceptual framework of empowerment and proposes a new French translation to the term.

### 2.4.1.1 Agency and opportunity structure

This study will use the conceptual framework from Alsop and Heinsohn (2005).

If a person or group is empowered, they possess the capacity to make effective choices; that is, to translate their choices into desired actions and outcomes” (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005).

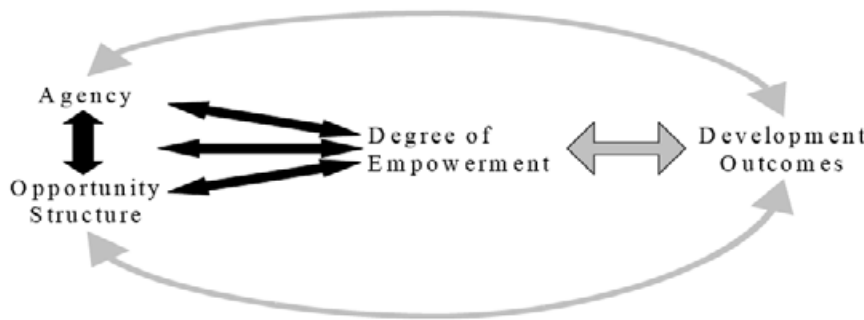


FIGURE 3: The Relationship between outcomes and correlates of empowerment (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005)

This capacity is described as having two components: *agency* and *opportunity structure*. Working together, these components give rise to different degrees of empowerment.

**Agency** is defined as an actor’s ability to make meaningful choices; that is, the actor is able to envisage options and make a choice that is associated with leading a good life. In other words, the ability of an individual or a group to set their own goals and act upon them (Kabeer, cited in Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). Alkire (2009) argues that empowerment can be seen as an expansion of agency – the ability to act on behalf of what you value and have reason to value, and she explains that many authors use Amartya Sen’s notion of agency as a main reference. Le Bossé (2003) goes in the same direction, proposing a new French translation to the term *empowerment*. Instead of *autonomisation*, he proposes *pouvoir d’agir*.

**Opportunity structure** is defined as the formal and informal contexts within which actors operate, in other words, the concrete material, social and institutional preconditions required to exert agency. This component focuses on the institutional environment, which offers people the opportunity to exert agency fruitfully (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) explain that people’s agency can be constrained by the institutional climate (information, inclusion/participation, accountability, local organizational capacity) and the social and political structures (openness,

competition and conflict) in which people live. An effective exercise of agency entails the overcoming of significant institutional and informal obstacles, including the domination of existing elite groups or of unresponsive public programmes.

### 2.4.2 Paulo Freire

Another main influence to empowerment is Paulo Freire, an important thinker about the empowerment of marginalized people, that he calls *the oppressed*. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) defines oppressors as those who deny personal autonomy of the oppressed by imposing a worldview paradigm that denies them the power to direct their own lives, and by convincing the oppressed that their circumstances are unalterable, with the exception of the interventions by the ruling classes.

In order to achieve liberation from oppressive circumstances, the oppressed have to realize the extent of their oppression and then, through reflection, commit themselves to the action of transforming the world. Before realizing the extent of their oppression, the oppressed tend to internalize the oppressor. In other words, the oppressed desires to become the oppressor and feels an irresistible attraction towards the oppressor's way of life. "Sharing this way of life becomes an overpowering aspiration. In their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressor, to imitate him, to follow him" (Freire, 1970, p. 49).

Rooted in the internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them, self-depreciation is an important characteristic of the oppressed. As Freire states (1970), the oppressed suffer from low self-esteem and are not aware of their full capabilities. They do not realize that without a formal education, they still know things. There are many essential things the oppressed know that are just as essential to life as the things the oppressors know.

So often they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything – that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness (1970, p. 49)

For Freire, only when the oppressed become involved in the struggle to their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. The realization of their value comes from the reflective participation in the act of liberation, what Freire calls praxis – meaning reflection joined to action upon the world in order to transform it.

### 2.4.3 Role of culture in human development

There is no doubt that the western modern ideology of development has many times created a notion of a cultural inferiority, as many cultures have been seen as incompatible with development, uncivilized, backward and primitive<sup>9</sup>. UNESCO (2009) states that perceptions of the poor tend to relegate them to situations of inferiority, constituting major obstacles to their empowerment. These perceptions may take many different forms – such as ignoring the huge body of indigenous knowledge about their local environment, or seeing their values as incompatible with development. Frequently, development programmes fail to recognize that some societies hastily labeled ‘underdeveloped’ have been living sustainably for generations (UNESCO, 2009).

Since the 1950’s, development has been seen as a normative program, as if there was a standard of development to be reached (Eade, 2002). Even common expressions such as *underdeveloped* and *developing countries* evidence the notion of a model to be caught up with. Consequently, local and traditional cultures have been mistakenly seen as obstructions to development (Eades; UNESCO, 2009).

Despite widespread assumptions to the contrary, there is no prescribed pathway for the development of a society, no single model on which development strategies should be based. The Western model of development, conceived as a linear process involving largely economic factors, is often incompatible with the complex social, cultural and political dimensions of societies pursuing different goals, reflecting their own values. (UNESCO, 2009, p.189)

Culture is frequently associated with the past – with heritage, tradition and habits. As already explained in this study, culture is at the same time heritage and project – plans, hopes, goals, targets and potentiality. However, when we set a model of development that ignores cultural diversity, we erase the futurity of divers cultures – as this model of development becomes the one and only possible project of future. Consequently, we see culture as belonging to the past and development as belonging to the future (Appadurai, 2004).

In the last decades, we have seen the emergence of a broader and more nuanced conception of human development. It takes culture as a central concept, since culture is precisely the medium through which individuals and societies express their ability to fulfill themselves and solve their own problems, therefore, an integral part of development (UNESCO, 2009). For Arjun Appadurai (2004) we need a change in the

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9. The term *Caiçara* used to be a synonym of lazyness and idleness in the Brazilian most important dictionary, *Dicionário Aurélio da Língua Portuguesa*, published in 1986 (Nunes, 2003).

way we look at culture to understand its relation with development. “This change requires us to place futurity, rather than pastness, at the heart of our thinking about culture”. The task then is to unleash the ‘capacity to aspire’ and enable individuals and groups to become the agents of their own development (UNESCO, 2009a). “Here empowerment has an obvious translation: increase the capacity to aspire” (Appadurai, 2004, p. 70). Obviously, we are not talking about aspirations of becoming modern Westerns – or, as stated by Freire, aspirations of resembling the oppressor –, we are talking about aspirations of flourishing and fulfillment.

Impoverished populations, which have been relegated to an inferior position, need a cultural revitalization in order to restore their own sense of pride and dignity. So that they can pursue development in line with their values and beliefs, in line with their cultural matrix. Verhelst and Tyndale (2002) say that cultural revitalization is important to enhance development by generating a sense of self-confidence and mutual trust.

What matters in a culture is its capacity to generate self-respect, the ability to resist exploitation and domination, and the ability to offer meaning to what people produce and consume, to land, liberty, life and death, pain and joy. (Verhelst & Tyndale, p.13)

#### **2.4.4 Design as a means of empowerment**

What has design to do with empowerment? Design is essentially a project, the exercise of planning and creating the material reality of our aspirations. It is the activity of projecting ourselves into the future. As Buchanan has described, ‘design’ is an instrument of cultural life responsible for bringing the values of a culture into concrete reality, “allowing us to transform abstract ideas into specific manageable form” (2001a). Design is a means for concretizing the values and aspirations of a culture and also to create new forms of interaction between humans and their environment. Design “can serve to synthesize the past with the present for the benefit of the future” (Blankenship, 2005, p. 24).

For Elisabeth Kaine (Kaine & Dubuc, 2010), an utilitarian object tells a lot about a culture because it represents at once several dimensions:

- » **function** (its usage and worth, the customs and rituals of a human group) ;
- » **technology** (the available resources, the skills, knowledge, and techniques);
- » **expression** (the aesthetic and symbolic dimensions).

For impoverished communities, design may have an obvious role: creating handicrafts for tourists and urban publics. These objects can be sold, generating income. Nonetheless, Kaine argues that besides the income generation, the creation of objects can be itself an important means of empowerment.

Designing a whole new object inspired by knowledge drawn from one's own cultural past enables one to truly grasp the inherent particularity of that other era. Creating thus becomes a means of understanding, of understanding oneself better, of projecting oneself. (Kaine, 2004, p. 154)

Creating crafts with local resources and rooted on their traditions becomes a means of overcoming economic impoverishment and, at the same time, regarding their culture with renewed enthusiasm. The outcome of this process may lead to confident cultural identities (Blankenship, 2005).



### **3. THE CASE OF GUARAQUEÇABA CRAFTS COOPERATIVE**



Caiçaras struggled to survive amid all those restrictions to their subsistence practices. After a decade of discouragement, since the creation of the Guaraqueçaba EPA and the National Park, several Caiçaras –especially the women – decided to fight back against their distressing situation and find new income sources. One of the promising alternatives of income was the production of handicrafts.

Crafts traditionally were divided between men and women (Diegues, 1998). Men used to produce fishing nets and tools, canoes and musical instruments made with *caxeta* – a wood that is object of environmental restrictions. These musical instruments were used in local festivities – called *Fandango* – created in retribution for voluntary collective work (*mutirão*) (Cariconde, 2003). Men's crafts were therefore linked to Caiçara's production system and their subsistence activities.

Women used to make household utensils and decoration. They worked mainly with natural fibers in weaving and basket-making. Notwithstanding, some fibers – such as liana – have been object of severe environmental restrictions, weakening this handicrafts tradition. Some fishing communities – such as Medeiros – also used to have a strong pottery tradition (Lopes, 2008). Dona Senhorinha Romão, a pottery master from Medeiros village, became nationally renowned since the 1960's for her rustic and beautiful production (Agência Estadual de Notícias, 2008; Cariconde, 2003; Rossi, 2006)<sup>10</sup>. The contact with industrialized goods, which allowed the possibility of buying cheap industrialized utensils, has damaged both traditions of making household utensils – natural fibers and pottery.

With the emergence of ecotourism, Guaraqueçaba has attracted the attention of an increasing number of visitors. Therefore, Caiçaras envisaged the possibility of selling handicrafts to tourists. But what kind of objects would tourists buy? Some women found out that they wanted small objects as tourist souvenirs. Two crafts associations were then created, one in the Town of Guaraqueçaba and another in Peças Village, aiming to sell their production to the tourists. The crafts association in the Town of Guaraqueçaba was created in 1997 (EduardoS, 2007; SPVS, 2005).<sup>11</sup> The Peças Village crafts association was created around 2002<sup>12</sup> by a group of women. They aimed to sell

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10. This is an example of lack of documentation, I know Dona Senhorinha Romão is deceased, but I have not found the year of her death.

11. All those initiatives have been poorly documented. There are many gaps of documentation. I have not found any documentation about how the association of the Town of Guaraqueçaba was created.

12. The problem of dates is typical of this case documentation. In the documents, the cooperatives and associations come officially to existence from the moment they find an institutional partner.

their production to the increasing number of tourists but also to support each other (Cultimar, 2007). At the beginning they invited any woman who knew a handicraft technique to be part of the club and exchange technical expertise. It was the first step to make women go out of their homes and strive to improve their life conditions. In Peças Village, some years later, native women also created a cooking cooperative that is thriving nowadays, serving meals to tourists. It is an interesting case, because Caiçara men used to be the protagonists, concerning making a living, and native women used to stay at home, cooking and doing handicraft. And then, all of a sudden, the women's activities became important sources of income (personal communications).

### **3.1 PARTNERSHIP WITH PROVOPAR**

Provopar – Programa do Voluntariado Paranaense – is a public institution, linked with the government of Paraná, who works with deprived populations. They wanted to put in practice a new project of income generation through craftsmanship, inspired by the empowerment approach, in a municipality with one of the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) in the State of Paraná. Moreover, Provopar aimed to encourage a bottom-up movement – by supporting a crafts association created by the community itself, and not by creating a new crafts cooperative from top-down. In 2003, Guaraqueçaba was chosen to receive Provopar pilot project of income generation through craftsmanship, named *Arte Nossa* [Our Art]. The goal of the pilot project was to acknowledge the value of the Caiçara culture, especially traditional craftsmanship, and to support an alternative source of income. The former Provopar manager for craftsmanship projects, Iramar Diório Hermógenes (personal communication, October 21, 2010), explained that it was a pilot project because they were testing the hypothesis that investing in the local culture continually for many years would have a great positive impact on the region. The project was conceived as long-term partnership and lasted 7 years, until 2010.

Through Provopar intervention, the artisans of all Guaraqueçaba region have been organized in a cooperative. Despite all the cooperative tradition, the Caiçara artisans initially had some trouble understanding the goals of a crafts cooperative and working together (Hermógenes, personal communication, October 21, 2010). For Hermógenes, the great challenge of the intervention was the artisans' organization. At the beginning, they did not understand that a cooperative structure means that the cooperative

belonged to the artisans and, therefore, each member is responsible for the destiny of the cooperative. To facilitate this understanding, the artisans received courses about management, organization and association (EduardoS, 2007; Paraná online, 2006).

The need to pass the ownership of the cooperative to the Caiçaras was taken seriously. At the beginning, Provopar provided the artisans with all the material, professional and economic resources to make the cooperative work. Little by little the support was withdrawn, to the point where the artisans were completely responsible for management of the cooperative. In 2010, the rights of property have been integrally transferred to the artisans, terminating the association with Provopar.

**IMAGE 13:** Headquarters of Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative



**IMAGE 14:** Inside view, the weaving workshop and the store of the cooperative.







Above. **IMAGE 15:** the pottery workshop. **IMAGE 16:** the looms of the weaving workshop. **IMAGE 17:** paper workshop - preparation of lily and banana fibers. **IMAGE 18:** paper workshop – sheet dryer.

Below. **IMAGE 19:** artisanal paper made of lily fiber. **IMAGE 20:** local pottery displayed at the cooperative store. **IMAGES 21 & 22:** banana fiber crafts (purses and rug).



No começo a Provopar que estava ajudando em tudo, mas já faz tempo que somos nós mesmos que pagamos luz, que pagamos água, que colocamos telefone, internet. A cooperativa que somos nós mesmos. Agora no fim do ano eles passam para nós mesmo e fica tudo com documento certo. Então a gente tem orgulho de saber que estamos fazendo uma coisa que a gente está vendo, o que a gente fez está aparecendo. E você está investindo em alguma coisa que vai aparecer. (Sonia Viana, personal communication, October 18, 2010)

*In the beginning Provopar was helping with everything, but for a long time now we are the ones who have been paying the electricity and water and subscribing to telephone and internet services. The cooperative here is ourselves. At the end of the year they will transfer it to us and then everything will be in the documents. So, we are proud of knowing we are doing something that we can see, and that we are being noticed. And you are investing in something that will be seen.*

At the beginning of the intervention, Provopar held workshops aiming to revitalize the craft tradition in Guaraqueçaba (at that moment, severely limited by natural resources restrictions), introduce environmentally friendly techniques and materials, and enhance the quality of products. These courses and workshops focused on three axes: pottery, weaving – using natural fibers –, and paper made of lily and banana fibers. Crafts made with natural fibers are one of the hallmarks of Caiçara crafts, despite the prohibition of the extraction of liana. Provopar introduced the use of banana tree fiber, as Guaraqueçaba region is an important banana producer. A banana tree gives fruits just once, so that after the harvest the trunk was usually seen as waste. Provopar introduced the technique to use this abundant resource to replace other fibers (Hermógenes, personal communication, October 21, 2010).

In 2004 and 2005, 20 local artisans took part in a design workshop developed in partnership with the Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná, focused on banana tree fiber products (Medeiros et al, 2006). In a total of 120 hours, this participatory workshop aimed to increase awareness about the possibilities and features of banana tree fiber, especially the fact that it is an environment-friendly resource. The workshops also aimed to make the artisans aware of all the steps involved in a banana fiber product: extraction, preparation, product development, production, finishing and marketing. Medeiros et al. (2006) explain that the methodology was developed to respect the multiple voices of the community members – considering the artisans as actors and creators –, to valorize the local identities and knowledge, and to make the artisans aware of their importance as agents in their environment.

As part of the project, Provopar built the cooperative headquarters in the town of Guaraqueçaba, a spacious building of 450m<sup>2</sup> that includes a store and a well-equipped



workshop<sup>13</sup> (Paraná Online, 2006). Some villages – such as Peças and Barbados – received smaller buildings, also comprising a store and a workshop. A cooperative member relates the equipment given by Provopar:

De 7 anos pra cá eles começaram a nos dar uma estrutura, desde a capacitação, palestras de cooperativismo, de venda. (...) Tudo o que você está vendo, é tudo dado pelo Provopar. (...) Na cerâmica aqui tem o forno elétrico aí, tem o a lenha também, tem 4 tornos manuais, tem um torno elétrico. Esse cilindro aqui que é para amassar o barro. (...) Daí tem a fibra. São 22 teares. Sete teares estão na sede e os outros estão com os artesãos pela região. Três rocas, duas manuais e uma elétrica. Teares para trabalhar com a fibra da bananeira, açucena. Na época [das oficinas] eles trouxeram 5 ou 6 mil de fios, junto com os teares. (...) Eles tiveram a preocupação de trazer bebedouros, louças para cozinha, talheres... tudo, tudo. É por isso que eu digo que nós temos sorte, temos que agradecer mesmo. (Ruth Liberato, personal communication, October 18, 2010)

*Seven years ago they started to give us a structure, from training to lectures on cooperative activities and marketing. (...) Everything you see, everything was given by Provopar. (...) For pottery, here we have the electric kiln, also the firewood kiln, four manual wheels, one electric wheel. This cylinder here is to knead the clay. (...) Then there is the fiber sector. We have 22 looms. Seven looms are in the headquarters and the others are spread among artisans in the communities. Three distaffs, one manual and one electric. Looms to work with banana tree fiber and lily fiber. At the time [of the workshops] they brought five or six thousand threads, together with the looms. (...) They took the care of bringing drinking fountains, dishware, cutlery... everything, everything. That is why I say we were lucky, we really have to be thankful.*

At the present time the cooperative counts with over 50 artisans, scattered in many Caiçara communities, and has a partnership with the Guarani community. For most of these artisans' families, craft became an important source of income and, sometimes, their only.

Provopar also helped the artisans to sell their production, sending their handicrafts to other cities and to crafts fairs in other countries. Provopar used to have two handicrafts stores in Curitiba. These two stores were closed in 2010, because the government of Paraná changed in January 2011 and the present governor belongs to a rival party. Provopar, being a public institution has to align its policies with the current government of Parana and its political stakes<sup>14</sup>. With the end of the

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13. Before the construction of the headquarters, the cooperative had lent a building by SPVS, the main environmental organization in Guaraqueçaba (SPVS, 2005).

14. The reason why the new administration of Provopar had to close the stores escapes my comprehension. The web site of the project *Arte Nossa* and of Guaraqueçaba crafts cooperative were also shut down, and, therefore, a major amount of the project documentation was put off-line. I do not understand the reasons for that.



partnership in December 2010, the cooperative will have to look for its own means of marketing its production. Presently, they rely mainly on the tourists that visit the headquarter store in the town of Guaraqueçaba.

### 3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

How does the crafts cooperative allow the empowerment of Caiçara artisans in Guaraqueçaba?

### 3.3 CENTRAL PROPOSITIONS

This study works with two basic propositions. First, according to the work of Elisabeth Kaine and the research group *Design & Culture matérielle*<sup>15</sup>, design can be an important means of empowerment for traditional communities (Kaine, De Coninck & Bellemare, 2010; Kaine & Dubuc, 2010). Design being understood as the activity of creating material culture – the products “that serve human beings in the accomplishment of their individual and collective purposes” (Buchanan, 2001a).

Second, this study works with the proposition that an empowering collective action to create, produce and sell handicrafts has to strengthen and valorize the local culture. By valorizing local culture, a collective action should have a meaning that goes beyond simple income-generation. This meaning allows people to act in line with their values and to create new means for overcoming their distressing circumstances and, therefore, be empowered.

Valorizing a culture is not a matter of maintaining its purity. There is no such thing as a pure culture because cultures do not have rigid borders (Kipuri, 2009). Karen Fiss (2009) affirms that the idea of cultural authenticity is artificial, because cultures always have been “*inextricable hybridities* – the products of migration, exchange,

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15. Research group of Université du Québec à Chicoutimi and Université de Montréal.

and cross-fertilization” (p.8). Taking culinary as an example, Sen (1999) tells that chili has been considered as the “signature tune” of Indian cooking, but chili was “unknown in India until the Portuguese brought it there only a few centuries ago. Today’s Indian curries are no less *Indian* for this reason” (p.243). Moreover, tomato is South-american of origin and was unknown in Europe until the XVI Century; today we cannot imagine Italian cooking without tomatoes.

Valorizing a culture is sustaining its capacity to be creative and to adapt to new circumstances, resonating with a community’s sense of who it is. In other words, valorizing a culture means enhancing its sense of identity and taking actions that have meaning to the community. Verhelst & Tyndale argue culture can be a source of creativity and self-confidence that allow a population to pursue their aspirations.

It is not purity which is most important in a culture, nor necessarily its antiquity, but its ability to adapt and be creative, and to screen and select from the many outside influences that it must confront. (Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002, p.13)

### 3.4 OBJECTIVES

This research will develop a case study of a traditional population that has been successful in transforming craft tradition into income-generation. The main question here is to understand how the artisans have been empowered (or disempowered) by the Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative. As the economical importance of the crafts cooperative for the Caiçara population of Guaraqueçaba has been already documented on several reportages<sup>16</sup>, this case study focuses on the cultural outcomes, recognizing how important culture is to human development.

In seeking to understand how craft design and production at the cooperative allowed for empowerment, this study will focus especially on the relation between empowerment and culture. The cultural dimension of empowerment implies in people recognizing the value of their own cultural heritage in order to project themselves into future – taking in consideration that a lively culture is both heritage and project (Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002). The cultural aspect of empowerment will be regarded in four dimensions: meaning, fulfillment, aspirations and cultural identity.

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<sup>16</sup>. This case lacks documentations on many aspects, however, the economic outcomes have been documented in the news as an example of success (Julião, 2009; Reu, 2010).

## **Meaning**

In the first place, this research aims to understand what crafts mean to the artisans of Guaraqueçaba, especially because *meaning* is the central notion of culture. Our system of meanings shapes our presence in the world. The meaning attributed to their crafts may allow us to grasp the significance and motivations of their actions.

## **Fulfillment**

Each culture has its own conception of what a good life is, of what may fulfill oneself. The question here is to understand if the cooperative activities gave the opportunities to the artisans to fulfill themselves.

## **Aspirations**

One of the main effects of disempowerment is that it prevents people “from even considering that there can be an alternative to the situation they are in” (Luttrell & Quiroz, 2009, p.13). And that means that their aspirational horizons are very short, they are not able to imagine other possibilities and create plans of action. Therefore they do not project themselves into future, living in a survival mode. For Appadurai (2004), in considering the futurity of culture, empowerment means to increase the capacity to aspire of impoverished people. This study will approach the artisans’ abilities to make plans, to recognize future challenges – and possible ways of overcoming these challenges –, and to project themselves into the future.

## **Cultural identity**

For Pierre Bourdieu (in Wacquant, 2004, p.403), the supreme form of dispossession is the shame of self. This statement shows how important it is to recognize and value our cultural identity. The pride of our cultural heritage is a source of self-confidence and autonomy.

Often external interventions in the production and design of crafts tend to damage the cultural identity translated in crafts. Lima (2010) and Borges (2011) explain that many interventions revealed to be futile for imposing exterior techniques and motifs and not preserving the community’s aesthetic values. Craft, for Borges, is the material expression of a culture and a lifestyle. Before intervening on local

crafts it is important to understand the culture that produced those objects. If introduced techniques, shapes and motifs do not revitalize the crafts tradition, they may homogenize local craft production, diminishing its cultural value (Lima, 2010; Leite, 2005). The objective here is to identify if the production of crafts for sale and Provopar workshops have changed the characteristics of local crafts. And how the artisans perceive those changes.

## **4. METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK**



## 4.1. METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted as a case study. This is a comprehensive research strategy that allows an in-depth study of an issue within a bounded system (Cresswell, 2007). Case studies are preferred when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, "when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (Yin, 2003, p. 1). In the case of the Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative it is desirable to gain understanding on the meaningful characteristics of real-life events. This case study makes use of a qualitative approach, in which the research "seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the view of participants" (Creswell, 2003, p. 20).

Moreover, case studies are especially appropriate when the phenomenon is highly context-based, and do not appear regularly throughout the society. There is no doubt that the case of Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative is singular, because it assembles, in the same context, dramatic environmental, social, economic and cultural issues. It is a remarkable opportunity to explore the dimensions of sustainable development and, at the same time, of the empowerment of impoverished populations.

For Yin (2003), a case study needs a defined unit of analysis. In other words, a case study should have the awareness of what the case is about, through the development of specific propositions. Yin explains that without specific propositions, the researcher might be tempted to cover every aspect of the case, which is impossible to do. "The more a study contains specific propositions, the more it will stay within feasible limits" (Yin, 2003, p.23). In qualitative research, as Deslauriers and Kérisit (1997) explain, propositions do not refer to causality, serving as a start point to investigation. The unit of analysis of this case study is the empowerment of craftspeople of Caiçara culture, and this topic will be explored through two propositions: 1) design, the creation of new objects, may be an important means of empowerment; 2) when dealing with populations of traditional cultures, cultural valorization is essential to the empowerment process.

This case study has an exploratory nature, because of its short duration and scarce resources; but also because empowerment is essentially context-based. In a seldom-researched context, such as Guaraqueçaba, it is difficult to determine what are the important factors to be assessed in advance. "Qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine" (Creswell, 2003, p. 22).

#### 4.1.1 Assessing empowerment

Before describing the methods used in this research, it is important to answer one question: how can we assess someone's empowerment?<sup>17</sup>

Despite growing interest and increased investments in empowerment, the development of instruments and indicators with which to monitor and evaluate empowerment processes and outcomes is still at an early stage. Project teams and governments still lack the tools necessary for determining whether and how projects and policies aimed at empowering stakeholders reach their intended goals. (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005, p.5)

As reported by Alsop & Heinsohn (2005), because of the scarcity of data on direct indicators of empowerment, the relationship between empowerment and development outcomes still remained a hypothesis. Therefore, much effort has been made in developing reliable universal indicators of empowerment, and there are still doubts if it is possible to find meaningful indicators that can be used in several contexts (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). Some indicators of empowerment are reliable in one context or point in time, and then completely irrelevant in another.

This difficulty is caused by the context-specific nature of empowerment (Le Bossé, 2003). Even in a specific context, empowerment may have different meanings to different stakeholders – such as the participants, the fieldworkers and the donors<sup>18</sup> –; “what are considered significant outcomes will vary widely across different perspectives.” (Jupp & Ali, 2010, p. 38)

There is another methodological challenge, as for Ibrahim & Alkire, “should we measure the empowerment people value or the powers they have even if they do not value these?” (2007, p.386). Agency has been understood as a main component of empowerment. If we consider Sen's definition – agency is a person's ability to act on behalf of things they value and have reason to value (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007) – we should pay attention to what people regard as important. Usually, people who enjoy high levels of agency are engaged in actions that are congruent with their values (Alkire, 2009).

For Alkire (2009), most assessments of agency are focused on kinds of agency that people are presumed to value. They do not attempt to investigate issues of people's own opinions and values as to whether or not they value the agency they possess

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17. Illustrating this problem: World Bank has adopted 'empowerment' as a pillar of its development actions. In 2005, the concept 'empowerment' was found in the documentation of over 1.800 World Bank-aided projects. However, the effectiveness of this concept was still hypothetical (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005).

18. Jupp & Ali (2010) give some examples of different factors which may be important to different stakeholders within the same context. (p.34)



or lack. These measures of agency ignore what Alkire will call *autonomy*. For this reason, Alkire (2009, p.468) has identified two distinct aspects of agency:

**Autonomy:** whether people are able to act on behalf of what they themselves value;

**Ability:** whether people are able to act on behalf of things they are assumed to have reason to value.

In assessing autonomy, we probe the person's own self-understanding of their situation.

The process of empowerment is easy to identify and measure for those active in the struggle to achieve them. It is our etic perspectives that make the whole thing difficult. When we apply normative frames of reference, we inevitably impose our values and our notions of democracy and citizen engagement rather than embracing people's own context-based experience of empowerment. (Jupp & Ali, 2010, p.12)

Jupp & Ali propose an approach to measure empowerment privileging people's own experience and perceptions of their reality. For them, what everyone agrees on is that empowerment is a process.

While the nature of the process may be quite different, a positive process of empowerment or a negative process of disempowerment can be recognized. If we let those being empowered define what this means to them (so they are no longer contested by external presumption), tracking both positive and negative change can be valuable and comparable. (Jupp & Ali, 2010, p.38)

Their methodology aims to track empowerment as a process of change. From the participants' self-assessment of their realities – their own analyses of change – indicators of empowerment can be derived.

#### **4.1.2 Assessing empowerment in this research**

Because of the short duration, this research has not developed empowerment indicators, being focused on collecting the artisan's perceptions of their realities. For sure, taking part in the cooperative has brought changes to the craftspeople's lives and living conditions. This research aims to explore the meaning of these changes from the participants' point of view in order to assess their experience of empowerment – or disempowerment.

Being an exploratory research, it does not search for conclusive answers. On the contrary, it explores questions and themes to be studied in further researches. Also, the understanding of the artisans' own analyses of change may allow for the development of future research projects linked with development and culture.

## 4.2 DATA COLLECTION

This case study was inspired by the ethnographic approach for data collection. Ethnography and case study are not synonyms, because ethnographic research does not always produce case studies (Yin, 2003). Ethnographic research aims to understand the meaning of the experience in the participants' point of view by immersing oneself in a community. Ethnography is a research method based on observing people in their natural environment, as they go about their everyday lives, in order to assess the meaningful and intentional aspects of human activity (AIGA, 2007; Aunger, 1995). "The ethnographer seeks a deeper immersion in others' worlds in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important" (Emerson et al., 1995, p.2). With immersion, the fieldworker seeks to enter into the *matrix of meaning* of the researched people.

Ethnographic research involves gathering information where the group actually works and lives and respecting the daily lives of individuals at the site – what is called fieldwork (Creswell, 2007). Most of the information is gathered through observation – especially through participant observation – and unstructured and semi-structured interviews.

This is the kind of research conducted in the first person, because it is carried out by the interactions of the researched people with the researcher's person and the researcher's personal characteristics: personality, physical attributes, gender, personal history, etc. In this case study, being inspired by ethnography, my personal characteristics took an important role in interacting with people in the field. From this point on, when referring to the interactions in the fieldwork, this study will use the first person of singular "I", because all the interactions were personal and subjective. "How people perceive the ethnographer determines what they tell him and what they let him observe" (Veggel, 2005, p. 6). Goffman explains about the subjective nature of ethnographic fieldwork. Field research involves:

subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situation, or their work situation, or their ethnic situation. (in Emerson et al., 1995, p.2).

In total, I stayed three weeks in the field, 16 days in the region of Guaraqueçaba and several days in Curitiba, capital of the State of Paraná. Guaraqueçaba was visited

twice, from September 19 to September 28, and from October 14 to October 20, 2010. Three fishing communities were visited (Peças, Barbados and Superagüi) and the town of Guaraqueçaba.

Yin (2003) considers that a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence, allowing data triangulation. In this study, data was collected from the following sources: interviews (unstructured and semi-structured), participant observation, photos and physical artifacts.

This study has made use of unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Unstructured interviews were used to gather contextual data with people that are not members of the cooperative. The interviews with cooperative members were semi-structured. They were all conducted in their workplace and most of them were group interviews. Some of the group interviews were planned to be individual interviews, but someone else ended up taking part in the conversation. Photos of crafts made at the cooperative and of caiçara material culture were important sources of data. This study also made use of participant observation during my stay at the fishing communities, when I had the opportunity to hang out with local people. My activities and encounters were registered in field notes. The kind of observation in this study can be classified as moderate participation.

#### **4.2.1 Interviews**

For Spradley (2001), interviews are a particular type of speech event. In an interview, “field researcher asks questions for the purpose of seeking answers directly related to the research” (Bailey, 2007, p.95). Spradley explains the main difference between an informal conversation and an interview: an interview has an explicit purpose, while people engaged in friendly conversations do not have an agenda to cover. In an interview, their verbal interaction targets mainly the interests of the researcher – and that is not necessarily the case during a conversation. The researcher also has to explain to the participant what the project is about and what the objective of the interview is. This study has made use of two kinds of interviews: unstructured and semi-structured.

#### **4.2.1.1 Unstructured interviews**

In this study, unstructured interviews were used to gather contextual data with people that are not part of Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative. An unstructured interview involves little standardization; rather than being planned, it evolves.

During an unstructured interview, the interviewee is given fairly free range to talk about any aspect related to the broad interests of the researcher, as long as he or she does not stray too long or too far from what the researcher thinks is important. (Bailey, 2007, p.96)

#### **4.2.1.2 Semi-structured interviews**

During fieldwork, all the interviews with members of Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews are generally organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions that is called an interview-guide, but the questions are not necessarily asked in a specific order. The main feature of a semi-structured interview is its flexibility. It is the flow of the interview that determines when and how a question is asked (Bailey, 2007). Other questions may also emerge from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Savoie-Zajc says (2009) that a semi-structured interview is an occasion in which interviewer and interviewee co-create meaning by reconstructing perceptions of events and experiences.

All the interviews with artisans took place at their workplace – at the cooperative workshops, or at their home, in the case of Superagüi Island, where the cooperative does not have a workshop. The interviews involved showing and explaining their work, their inspiration, their techniques and skills, the materials used, etc.

Notwithstanding, there was little standardization between the interviews, some were individuals, and some were group interviews.

#### **4.2.1.3 Group interviews**

Most of the interviews in this study involved more than one interviewee. Some of them were planned as individual interviews but, in place, someone else ended up taking part in the conversation. I believe that since the artisans were proud of their work, they wanted to share it with an audience, showing that someone from a foreign university was interested in their work.

Group interviews can be a valuable way to learn about a community quickly (IDEO, 2009). Their main advantage is generating a considerable quantity of data in a relatively short period from a larger number of people than would be possible by individual interviews. They also allow the interviewer to perceive group member's reactions to each other (Schensul, 1999). Their main disadvantage is not allowing a deep understanding of individual issues and motivations.

I have remarked that interviews with only women had a completely different dynamic – considering that almost all the cooperative members are women. The presence of any men stopped them from talking about their life conditions, their achievements, dreams, plans and frustrations. In the presence of a man, the conversation turned about crafts skills, materials, and creativity – in short, they turned about craftsmanship itself.

#### **4.2.1.4 Interview guide**

In the field, the interview guide has been constantly adapted. Some abstract questions were dropped. Some of the initial questions turned out to be completely irrelevant. Some questions were added because they seemed to be meaningful to the participants – for example, I added questions about their fulfillment. In addition, I tried to formulate the questions using their own vocabulary.

Even if the nature of the interviews much varied, they were mainly based in this interview guide.

- How long have you been producing handicrafts?
  - » How did you learn it?
- How long have you been producing crafts for sale?
- What techniques do you work with?
- Which of them did you learn at the cooperative?
- Show me your creations (at this moment I took pictures of the objects)
  - » What is the technique used in this object? How did you learn it?
  - » What are the materials used in this object? Why did you choose them?
- Which techniques do you identify the most with? Why?
- What kind of craft do you produce more often?
- What are the objects that are easier to sell? Which are the best sellers?

- What do crafts mean to you?
- What are the distinguishing features of Caiçara crafts?
- What is the Caiçara culture in your opinion?
- How was your life before the crafts cooperative?
- What has changed since?
- How has the money that you earn with crafts changed your life?
- Do you feel fulfilled with your work?
- How do you see yourself in the future (in 10 years)?

#### **4.2.2 Photos and physical artifacts**

The focus of this study is craftsmanship, therefore craft goods themselves are an important source of data. The handicrafts' aesthetics, materials, techniques, and forms are all important data.

When interviewing the artisans, I asked them to show me their creations and then I took photos of the objects. While photographing their handicrafts, I asked questions about their process of designing an object. Since the interviews took place at the artisans' workplaces, many photos of their production and equipment were taken.

#### **4.2.3 Observation**

Participant observation is a method with roots in traditional ethnographic research, in which an observer takes part in the daily activities and interactions of people being studied as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their culture (Dewalt, Dewalt & Wayland, 1998). The participating observer seeks opportunities to spend time with the members of communities in which she or he is working. It means "taking part in usual and unusual activities, 'hanging out', and conversing (as compared with interviewing) while consciously observing and ultimately recording what was observed" (Dewalt et al., 1998, p.261). Being actively engaged in the lives of people brings the researcher closer to the perspectives held by study populations.

The primary method of recording participant observation data is field notes. “Field notes are accounts describing experiences and observations the researcher has made while participating in an intense and involved manner” (Emerson et al., 1995, p.5). One important aspect about field notes is that “field notes are simultaneously data and analysis” (Dewalt et al., 1998). The field notes are constructed by the researcher, at the same time that they register the events they embed the researcher’s impressions of the events. Two researchers may observe the very same event at the same time and take completely different notes.

#### **4.2.3.1 Participant x nonparticipant observation**

The terms non-participant and participant observation indicate the degree to which the researcher actively participates in the field setting (Bailey, 2007). There is a continuum in the degree of participation, ranging from pure observation – as used by some sociologists and psychologists – to pure participation, that means “going native”(Dewalt et al., 1998).

Having in mind that participation implies emotional involvement while observation requires detachment, Spradley (1980, cited in Dewalt et al., 1998) described four degrees of participation and observation:

- 1. Nonparticipation** – no active interaction with people is required.
- 2. Moderate participation** – when the ethnographer occasionally interacts with people in the scene. In this case, the fieldworker participated in only certain everyday activities of the community.
- 3. Active participation** – when the fieldworker engages in almost everything the local people are doing as a means of trying to learn the cultural rules of behavior.
- 4. Complete participation** – when the ethnographer is or becomes a member of the group that is being studied.

In the case of this study, most of the observation could be classified as moderate participation. In one of the communities, Peças, I was hosted by a family, shared meals, watched TV and hung out with local people. This time spent together provided me with the keys to interpret and understand their actions and values. In the other communities, I occasionally engaged informal conversations with villagers.

#### 4.2.3.2 Why participant observation?

Living with, working with, laughing with people that one is trying to understand provides sense of the self and the Other that isn't easily put in words. It is a tacit understanding that informs both the form of research, the specific techniques of data collection, the recording of information, and subsequent interpretation of materials collected. (Dewalt et al., 1998)

First and foremost, as for Dewalt et al. (1998), participant observation enhances both the quality of data obtained during fieldwork and the quality of interpretation of data. The tacit understanding of a culture informs the interpretation of meaning.

In the ethnographic point of view, there is no such thing as 'neutral' observation. Kleinman et al. (1997, p.477) states that attempts to attain 'scientific' distance by being inert may lead us to produce the least objective data. For the reason that we are likely to fill in the process of interpretation with our own surmises, instead of catching the process as it occurs in the experience that we take part.

Pierre Bourdieu adds:

One does not have to choose between participant observation, a necessarily fictitious immersion in a foreign milieu, and the objectivism of the 'gaze from afar' of an observer who remains as remote from himself as from his object. Participant objectivation undertakes to explore not the 'lived experience' of the knowing subject but the social conditions of possibility – and therefore the effects and limits – of that experience and, more precisely, of the act of objectivation itself. It aims at objectivizing the subjective relation to the object which, far from leading to a relativistic and more or less anti-scientific subjectivism, is one of the conditions of genuine scientific objectivity. (Bourdieu, cited in Wacquant, 2004, p. 398)

The understanding gained with participant observation was fundamental for data analysis and interpretation. This understanding provided me with a matrix of meaning for interpreting the sense of my findings.

#### 4.2.4 Difficulties in the field

The fieldwork faced several difficulties. First, the lack of a preliminary study. The distance between Montreal, in Canada, and Guaraqueçaba, in the south of Brazil, is huge. Moreover, Guaraqueçaba is a rather isolated area, with few communication infrastructure – few places have Internet access. Therefore I could not contact the potential participants before I actually arrived there for fieldwork. I tried to mitigate



this problem by spending one week in the first visited community, Peças Village, to integrate with the community, having informal conversation with people. During this first week, I identified the vocabulary used by them and some informants, and also planned the rest of data collection.

Second, I had little time to contact artisans, find out who were the local crafts masters and gain people's trust. At the same time that I was entering the field I was already gathering data. With the artisans of Superagüi island (from Barbados and Superagüi village), I just had the opportunity to make a preliminary brief interview. I did not have the opportunity to gather those artisans for an in-depth interview about the meaning of their work and their aspirations. To make a robust study, it would be essential to make a second visit to the fishing communities.

Third, this study had to deal with weather conditions, which in many cases were not favorable for camping and traveling by boat. For example, the visit to Superagüi Island had to be prematurely interrupted because of the weather.

At last, this study had few resources to travel through a region that does not have transportation infrastructure – traveling between the communities is very expensive. Even for a governmental institution such as Provopar, transportation cost is a huge problem in Guaraqueçaba, and that renders any research or social intervention difficult (Iramar Hermógenes, personal communication, October 21, 2010). The access to any village is difficult. The few roads are in very bad condition and usually people avoid them, preferring to travel by boat – even in the continent. There are no cars or roads on the islands and there are no boat lines linking the villages on a regular basis either. There are only boat lines linking Paranaguá (a major coastal city and an important harbor) either to the town of Guaraqueçaba, to Peças village, or to Superagüi village. So, for example, if someone wants to go from the town of Guaraqueçaba to Superagüi, they have to take a boat to Paranaguá (3 hours) and then another boat to Superagüi (4 hours). In order to visit other villages, it is necessary to hire villagers who own a boat.

### 4.3 FIELDWORK

Case study and ethnographic research involve a detailed description of the setting, followed by analysis of the data for themes or issues (Creswell, 2003). This section intends to describe my route in the field, my impressions about the communities, how I met the participants and the circumstances of the interviews. It is important to overview this route because the interviews were really different and the places visited are really different. This overview is also an opportunity to glance at the region material culture.

Guaraqueçaba is a vast region; therefore the fieldwork was focused on the town of Guaraqueçaba and on the Superagüi National Park – composed of two islands, Peças and Superagüi. I visited the town of Guaraqueçaba, a community on Peças Island, and two communities on Superagüi Island: Superagüi village and Barbados.

IMAGE 23: Satellite view of the field (by Google).



### 4.3.1 Peças Village

Peças, the main community of Peças Island, is a Caiçara community of approximately 300 inhabitants and it is the most accessible fishing community in Guaraqueçaba. The village is the best spot to watch dolphins in southern Brazil, which is the reason why the number of tourists increases every year. Although the village receives, in the summer, hundreds of people everyday, few stay overnight; there are only two inns. Constructions are restricted by IBAMA, who monitors the village by satellite.

At first, I spent one week at Peças Village, immersing myself in the local culture. I already knew this community because I had spent many vacations there when I was a child. The last time I had visited Peças was 20 years ago. In 20 years, I can say that the village changed a lot. The first noticeable change was the arrival of television, which changed the way people gather. For example, in the evening people used to gather to chat and now they watch TV. The second change is that the fishes are disappearing and nobody knows exactly the reason. Because Peças is a fishing community, many families lost their livelihoods. I have listened many stories of depression and despair that drove the women to take action – simply because they had to do something. Native women used to stay at home, cooking and doing handicraft. And, all of a sudden, the women's activities became the major source of income for the community. Besides the crafts cooperative, the native women also created a cooking cooperative that is

**IMAGE 24:** Local cooperative building. **IMAGE 25:** a sign leading to the cooperative. **IMAGES 26:** handicrafts made with seeds and shells. **IMAGES 27:** fish-scale flowers and flowerpots made with tiny-coconut trees.



thriving, serving meals to the increasing number of tourists. The cooking cooperative also works for distributing the available food among local families – the scarcity of fish put some families in difficult situations now and then. The arrangement for monetary exchanges developed by this cooperative ensures food supply for most families (clearly this cooperative deserves a case study). Local women have set up two successful cooperatives: one of handicrafts and another of cooking. They are proud of themselves and of the outcomes of their work, seeing themselves as warriors that have improved their families' livings, gained respect and autonomy. With the success of the cooking cooperative, the crafts cooperative lost its importance. At the moment, it counts with only 3 craftswomen; it used to count with over 10. Nowadays most women work in the cooking cooperative or with other hospitality activities.

By coincidence, my childhood friends, and their families, are deeply involved with craft. One of them is Renato Pereira de Siqueira, also known as Renato Caiçara, a renowned folk artist. He used to be one of the cooperative craft instructors, hired by Provopar and by another social project, called Cultimar. For over 10 years he has been bridging the gap between universities and Caiçara communities, guiding researchers, elaborating ethnographic maps, and having co-written two books about Caiçara culture<sup>19</sup>. He gave me a valuable help in contacting people, sharing his experiences and suggesting references, such as articles, books and films. He also offered to guide me to other villages. His siblings are all artists and artisans, and one of his sisters is a cooperative member. I had the chance of spending several days with these families, having meals together and chatting informally<sup>20</sup>. This proximity has its pitfalls, as I did not feel comfortable in interviewing people who used to be my childhood friends. Going back to the village after 20 years with an audio-recording device seemed awkward and even unethical. I decided to look for participants in other villages, on the Superagüi Island.

In Peças Village, I interviewed Renato Caiçara and also Rosina Ventura Pereira, one of the cooperative founding members. We visited the cooperative building – that consists in a store and a workshop – along with her husband, Azito. On one hand, his presence was important and valuable to understand the male perspective about craft, on the other hand, it prevented me to ask questions about women's conditions.

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19. Siqueira, R.P., Mellinger, L., & Silva, M. D. (2009). *Recursos naturais na vida Caiçara*. Curitiba: Cultimar. Siqueira, R. P. et al. (2009). *As lendas na educação Caiçara*. Curitiba: Cultimar.

20. My visits were a few weeks before Brazilian presidential elections, so I had many conversations about the political debates, about their hopes and dreams for the future, what the region problems are, what they look for in a president, how their lives are nowadays, etc. These discussions about the elections were a valuable opportunity to grasp their understanding of the reality.



### 4.3.2. Superagüi village

Superagüi is the largest Caiçara village with around 1000 inhabitants. It is more isolated than Peças village and conserves more traces of Caiçara culture, such as the fandango festivals. It used to be mainly a fishing village but now ecotourism is the most important industry. The village receives many visitors interested in exploring the National Park. Differently from Peças, Superagüi does not have the same cooperating structure. Renato Caiçara told me that the existence of six different Christian churches causes lots of conflicts. For example, Provopar is currently building a space to accommodate a crafts store and a cooking cooperative and women are arguing about how to share the space (I overheard some comments about it and one craftswoman confirmed them in a interview). In Superagüi, some artisans joined the crafts cooperative and others are independent. The ones that joined the cooperative are asked to give classes and teach their technique to other women; in return they can sell their production in the cooperative stores.

In Superagüi, I briefly interviewed two artisans and had informal conversations with two others. Renato Caiçara introduced me to all of them. The two interviewed artisans were: Narzira, who is part of the cooperative, and Domingas, who is independent. Renato and I visited their house, and both of us asked questions about their production. All the artisans in Superagüi make fish-scale flowers because they are easy to sell.

**IMAGE 28:** Superagüi village walkway. **IMAGE 29:** a fish-scale shade made by Narzira. **IMAGE 30:** Domingas only makes fish-scale flowers. **IMAGE 31:** A parrot puppet, Narzira knows that the tourists love endangered species.



### 4.3.3. Barbados village

This is a small fishermen village (around 80 inhabitants) on Superagüi Island, very isolated from the continent. There is no electricity service, only some solar panels and diesel generators. People are very simple, they have few industrialized goods and few modern comforts. What is outstanding is how well organized the village is. The houses are simple, but well decorated; there is always an attention to detail. Natives have very little idea about what is going on in the outside world. There is a small amount of money circulating – local economy has been working mostly with exchange. People there have been severely affected by environmental change and conservation policies: fishes are scarce; harvesting has been restricted and hunting is not allowed anymore. Therefore, the need for money is currently increasing and the money that arrives with tourists is welcome. There is a well-known restaurant in the community. During the summer, some tourists hire boats to have meals there.

At Barbados, I briefly interviewed just one artisan, Cesarina Lopes. She sells her handicrafts to the tourists that visit the restaurant or she sends her production to be sold at the cooperative stores. Most of what she produces is utilitarian, the same objects that she makes for her own use (see image 33). You can see the same objects in her house. Many times she produces miniature versions of utilitarian objects for tourists, because she knows small objects are easier to sell (image 35).

**IMAGE 32:** Barbados village. **IMAGE 33:** Cesarina shows her mats and rugs, she makes them for sale and for her own use. **IMAGE 34:** Cesarina's kitchen. **IMAGE 35:** Miniatures of utilitarian objects made for sale





#### 4.3.4. Town of Guaraqueçaba

The town of Guaraqueçaba (around 2000 inhabitants) is a town, not a community. A town refers to a western notion of space and property, while in the Caiçara communities most of the areas are treated as commons. The town of Guaraqueçaba is the municipality capital, so it does not rely solely on fishing. There are public services and banks. Most of its inhabitants are Caiçara, but there are also people who moved from other parts of Brazil. Nevertheless the impoverishment of fishing communities affected the whole region.

The headquarters of the crafts cooperative is situated there. The cooperative sells crafts from the entire region of Guaraqueçaba, and the diversity of products is remarkable. For me, it shows how rich the culture of this region is.

I visited the cooperative during a member meeting, in which I introduced myself to the group, explained my research project and asked if anyone wanted to participate. The cooperative members decided that I should return in three days. On Monday, October 18, 2010, all the artisans wishing to give an interview about their work would be available to talk to me. At the cooperative headquarters, I interviewed six artisans in three long, in-depth group interviews. The three interviews were remarkable and very distinct. The first one was more technical and the last one was

**IMAGE 36:** basketwork from the communities. **IMAGE 37:** the pottery sector, pieces waiting for finishing. **IMAGE 38:** craftswoman makes crochet. **IMAGE 39:** Provopar store, in Curitiba (already closed)



very moving, making us all cry and laugh out loud. I am really thankful that these artisans opened their hearts to me.

**Interview 1:** Ruth Liberatto and Rodrigo Castro (cooperative supervisors).

**Interview 2:** Ida Alves (former cooperative president); Valdire Fraga and Aparecida Gonçalves.

**Interview 3:** Sonia Viana, Valdire Fraga and Aparecida Gonçalves.

#### **4.3.5 Peças Village – second visit**

Before leaving Guaraqueçaba, I had to say goodbye to the people who had welcomed me. In this visit I had a remarkable informal conversation with a girlfriend of mine and two other local women. It started as a friendly conversation in which I described my fieldwork, the people I had visited, the crafts I had seen. Gradually they made comments about my findings, and the discussion grew. It ended up being a moving discussion about the meaning of women's empowerment, in which we all cried tears of joy and tears of distress. They all affirm that local women are warriors, fighting to change their living conditions, and being successful sometimes. Again, I am really thankful for their trust in opening their hearts to me.

#### **4.3.6 Curitiba**

During my stay in Brazil, I was based in Curitiba, capital of Paraná, 170 km far from Guaraqueçaba. In Curitiba were situated the headquarters of Provopar, and the two crafts stores, where handicrafts from Guaraqueçaba used to be sold. Unfortunately, one store, at the airport, had already been closed when I arrived. The other store was about to be closed (see image 39), because the Government of Parana would change in January 2011 and the next governor belongs to a rival party – therefore Provopar projects would be re-structured. I also had the chance to interview Provopar manager, Iramar Hermógenes, the one responsible for the craftsmanship pilot project.



#### 4.4 DATA ANALYSIS – MAKING SENSE OUT OF DATA

The process of data analysis involves making sense out of collected data. It is an ongoing process involving continual reflection about the data, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data and making an interpretation of their larger meaning (Creswell, 2003). In qualitative research, fieldworkers overlap data collection and analysis (Kleinman et al., 1997).

La recherche qualitative présente un caractère itératif et rétroactif: on y rencontre la simultanéité de la collecte de données, de l'analyse et de l'élaboration de la question de recherche, ce que d'aucuns ont appelé de modèle d'adaptation continue. (Deslauriers & Kérisit, 1997, p.106)

It means that the field researcher formulates a research question and some propositions as a start point. In the contact with the participants, the question and the propositions are continually reformulated, and the actual object of study is constructed progressively – linking the collected data, the analyzed sense and the literature (Deslauriers & Kérisit, 1995; Veggel, 2005). The field is a source of new questions and new propositions, so the researcher usually will discover some pertinent questions and aspects while collecting data.

De la même manière que la théorie s'élabore progressivement, les questions et propositions prennent forme à mesure que les données sont analysées; en recherche qualitative, la proposition ne provient pas seulement de la connaissance théorique du chercheur, mais aussi et surtout de sa sensibilité aux données qu'il recueille et de sa connaissance intime du milieu qu'il étudie. (Deslauriers & Kérisit, 1997, p.96)

In fact, during this study the research question did not change. It always looked for understanding craftsmanship as a means of empowerment for Guaraqueçaba Caiçara population. Nevertheless, my understanding of empowerment, human development and culture has much evolved since the beginning of this study. The theoretical framework that this study had initially adopted for empowerment and culture did not quite fit the empirical reality of the case. Following the early theoretical framework would mean to waste most of the case complexity and interest. The data collected empirically made me seek to expand my vision of empowerment, culture and human development, in order to embrace the meanings offered by this case. Hopefully, recent researches support my findings in this case – a prolific literature links culture and development, and discusses the nature of empowerment. Consequently, the problematic has been rewritten after the data collection, which is usual in qualitative research (Deslauriers & Kérisit, 1997).

#### 4.4.1 Data treatment

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. At first, all the interviews and field notes were read through aiming to find a general sense of data and reflect about the case overall meaning. After reading all the notes and interviews, a list of topics was made, and I tried to find patterns in the data. The recurrent topics were clustered in general themes, from which I chose the themes related to the research question and propositions. At this point the field notes were put aside and data treatment focused on the interviews. Field notes have been useful to enrich and enhance data interpretation, providing the sense of the in-site experience.

The second step resembles a funnel. The interviews were coded, based on the general themes, labeling some text chunks (using Creswell's expression) with codes and sub-codes. The chunks were assembled, forming several categories of data. At this point I tried to understand what each category really meant. As a result I remarked that I had two clusters of interview chunks: one from the in-depth interviews and another from the superficial and brief interviews (with loosely related categories). The in-depth interviews had many features in common, such as similar themes, and they were all made in the participants' workshop. Consequently, I decided to focus the data treatment on the in-depth interviews and their extracts became the building blocks of data treatment and data interpretation. These interviewed artisans were:

From Peças village – Rosina Ventura Pereira (with the participation of her husband Azito Pereira) and Renato Caiçara.

From the town of Guaraqueçaba - Ruth Liberatto; Rodrigo Castro; Ida Alves; Valdire Fraga; Sonia Viana and Aparecida Gonçalves.

The other interviews were used to enrich data interpretation. It is important to say that the other interviews and informal conversations do not contradict the results presented in this study. Moreover, the photos from all the interviewed participants are used to illustrate the themes and discussions and to enhance the understanding of this case. The in-depth interviews were once more coded with the most relevant themes. The interviews extracts were assembled in 4 categories that reflect the empiric experience in the field, in line with theoretic concepts adopted by this study and with its objectives. These categories will be presented and discussed in the next chapter.

#### 4.4.2 Interpreting Data

Interpreting data means binding theory and data together, aiming a balance between theoretical and empirical work (Deslauriers & Kérisit, 1997). The socio-cultural reality is never self-evident: one perceives it through preconceptions (Veggel, 2005). These preconceptions are the glasses through which we perceive and make sense of our reality. Without these glasses (they can be theories, religious beliefs, cultural values, worldviews, etc.), reality would be a multitude of non-discernible stimuli. Interpreting data means making sense of the data by using certain theories, or glasses if you like.

(...) Knowledge originates in the interplay between preconceptions—theory if you like—and empirical experience. To reiterate, one perceives patterns, relations, etc. in the sociocultural reality according to one's preconceptions. By making these preconceptions explicit, and by reflecting on the appropriateness of them with regard to a given problem, one actually confronts these preconceptions with empirical reality and advances one's understanding of it. (Veggel, 2005, p.11-12)

Because reality is never self-evident, the participants' meanings are never pristine objects captured by the researcher, on the contrary, “meanings are interpretative constructions assembled and conveyed by the ethnographer” (Emerson et al., 1995, p.108). In this study, each of the four categories of interview extracts were examined in the light of this study problematic and the preliminary analyses occurred *in situ*.

#### 4.4.3 Taking another point of view

Kleinman et al. (1997) state that interpretative analyses, if done well, might lead us to discover a phenomenon that affects many different people and has remained out of radar. But how can one know if the interpretation was well-done? Some first interpretations, made in the field, were discussed with people from Peças village. And the advanced interpretations, how can one know if they are accurate? To be sure it would be necessary to go back to Guaraqueçaba and validate the interpretations with the participants, but this study does not have the resources to do so. The contact with another traditional culture, in a completely different context, gave me some clues to interpret this case in a manner that may be significant to other traditional communities.

I work as a research assistant in the research group *Design et culture matérielle: développement communautaire et cultures autochtones* (DCM) of Université du Québec à Chicoutimi and Université de Montréal. DCM aims to make indigenous

communities in Québec and in Brazil regain control over their patrimony and the expression of their identity under a perspective of empowerment, cultural valorization and sustainability (Kaine, De Coninck & Bellemare, 2010). In DCM, I work in a specific project, *Ateliers de création de nouveaux produits identitaires Atikamekw destinés aux marchés touristiques*, directed by prof. Anne Marchand. This project is a partnership with the Atikamekw crafts cooperative, Coopérative des Arts Nehirowisiw. Atikamekw is one of Québec's First Nations.

At the beginning, this project and my case study were not connected. However, getting to know the point of view of indigenous craftspeople that live in a completely different context – in another hemisphere, in a country with a very high Human Development Index – provided me with the scope for interpreting the data from Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative. When artisans from both cultures make very similar statements, we can induce that there is something significant in those affirmations. The Atikamekw perspective shed light to some data that I had considered opaque at the beginning.

## **5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**



This chapter will weave interview extracts, comments and interpretations. It is divided in four main themes: 1) the meaning of craft for the cooperative members; 2) future challenges identified by the cooperative members; 3) Guaraqueçaba cultural identity translated in crafts; 4) negative impacts of the cooperative on local culture. Some themes have been divided in sub-themes. After each section of extracts and comments, there is a discussion about that theme. And, at last, this chapter presents a general discussion about the results, discussing the crosscutting aspects of this case.

## **5.1. THE MEANING OF CRAFT FOR THE COOPERATIVE MEMBERS**

Meaning is the central notion of culture. In this study, it is fundamental to understand the meaning that the artisans attribute to their crafts, so that we can understand their motivations and reasons to create crafts and to take part at the cooperative. Some meanings were recurrent at the interviews, concentrating most of the artisans' motivations to act. These central meanings were: crafts as a gainful activity, crafts as a means of self-expression, a source of self-esteem and fulfillment.

### **5.1.1. Craft as a gainful activity**

In the first place, craft is a gainful activity; it is an income source. This meaning is directly related to the fundamental struggle to survive. We can grasp this struggle in an islander's statement:

A gente tem que sobreviver de alguma coisa. A gente é um sobrevivente, a gente precisa de comer. E tem que ter o dinheiro para poder sobreviver, senão não pode. E tem que ter dinheiro para comprar o remédio, e tem que ter as coisas [o artesanato] para poder vender pra ter aquele dinheiro. (Rosina)

*We have to make a living out of something. We are survivors, we need to eat. And we need to have money to survive, otherwise it is impossible. And we need money to buy medicine, and we need to have those things [the crafts] to sell in order to have that money.*

In the fishing communities there are no regular jobs. And before the cooperatives, women did not have gainful activities. Most of the interviewed cooperative members – 7 out of 9 – reported that the money earned with craft is important to improve their

life quality. The cooperative supervisors are aware of this meaning for the artisans. They explain the importance of the income generated through craftsmanship:

O meio das pessoas chegarem até aqui é a procura de um meio de renda. Muitas vezes tem famílias, tem senhoras, que não tem, não é? O que elas tem que fazer? Então elas vêm até aqui, elas aprendem a mexer no tear, a manusear um barro, muitas vezes ela já tem isso com ela, daí ela desenvolve... Daí ela já faz uma pecinha, já começa a vender, já começa a ganhar. É pouco, mas começa a ter uma renda que já te ajuda dentro de casa. (Ruth)

*The reason people usually come here is to look for a source of income. Many times there are families, old ladies, who don't have it. What can they do? So they come here, they learn to use the loom, to work with pottery, many times they already have a notion, then they develop it... Then they make a little handicraft, start selling, and start earning. It's little, but they start having a source of income that helps in the household.*

Não há alternativa de trabalho. Aqui em Guaraqueçaba a questão é que é uma APA, então a pessoa vai viver dos recursos naturais – que são essas fibra naturais, que a gente trabalha e faz artesanato – ou vão viver do turismo. Porque a população não tem outro meio. Então não tem como esperar um crescimento como num centro urbano e nem pode, por ser APA. (...) Você não pode pescar – porque não tem peixe, está em defesa – mas você pode fazer um artesanato. Você tem uma alternativa de renda. (Rodrigo)

*There is no alternative of jobs. Guaraqueçaba is an EPA, so either the person will make a living from the natural resources – the natural fibers with which we work and make handicrafts – or they have to make a living from the tourism, because the population has no other means. We cannot expect a development similar to an urban center, even because it's prohibited, since [Guaraqueçaba] is an EPA. (...) You cannot fish – because fishes are disappearing or because it is forbidden – but you can make handicrafts. You have an alternative income source.*

The impact of the earnings with crafts on the artisans' life conditions is different in the Town of Guaraqueçaba and in the fishing communities. In the Town of Guaraqueçaba, the money earned at the cooperative is combined to other incomes in order to make a living. Often craftswomen reported that their husbands' earnings are not enough to make ends meet, particularly when their husbands are fishermen.

**Question: how has the money earned with crafts changed your life?**

Diferença faz, substancial ainda não. Você estar vivendo só do artesanato ainda não. (Ruth)

*It makes a difference, but not substantial yet. Making a living only from the crafts, not yet.*



Deu pra comprar as coisas pra gente, porque só do marido não dá para manter a casa. É isso, ajudou muito. Pra quem nunca ganhou nada que nem eu, ajuda. (Cida)

*We could buy things for ourselves, because only the husband's money is not enough. That's it, it helped a lot. For people who had never earned anything like me, it helps.*

Ajuda, bastante. Às vezes intera para pagar uma água, uma luz. Não é muito, mas já ajuda bastante. (Valdire)

*It helps, a lot. Some times it helps to pay water or electricity. It is not a lot, but it really helps.*

In the fishing communities, the money earned with crafts is much more important, because there are no regular jobs there.

No contexto em que a gente vive, em que por exemplo 50 reais é uma ajuda, tem famílias que vivem com 100 reais por mês. Conseguem o alimento e não tem a sobra de dinheiro. Então, nessa condição, trabalhar com artesanato é bem interessante. O artesanato realmente vem a suprir as necessidades de uma família. (Renato)

*In the context we currently live, in which for example 50 reais (approximately 30\$ CAD) helps, there are families who live with 100 reais a month. They get food and there is no money left. So, in this condition, working with handicrafts is very interesting. Crafts really supply the needs of a family.*

Almost all the cooperative members are women, and before the cooperative, women did not have gainful activities in the fishing communities. Nowadays, women who participate in a cooperative earn more money than most of the local men. Moreover, sometimes they are the only people in their families with an income. A couple in Peças village commented:

Husband: Aqui a mulherada aí trabalha mais que os homens.

*Here the women work more than men.*

**Question: Do they earn more money than the men?**

Husband: Tem homem que só vive à custa da mulher.

*Some men live solely at women's expenses.*

Wife: A gente trabalha mesmo!

*We do work!*

In this study, more important than discussing the economic gains is discussing how the money gained in the cooperative influenced their behavior and life conditions. In other words, what the money allowed them to be and to do. Clearly, having a gainful

activity allowed for the women's emancipation. In the Caiçara society, women used to be housewives, staying at home. The craftswomen told me how their lives used to be before the cooperative.

A vida é melhor agora. Antigamente as pessoas casavam e as mulheres só prestavam para ficar enfiadas dentro da cozinha, para fazer comida. Antigamente era assim [risos]. Era só praquilo não servia pra outra coisa. (Cida)

*Life is better now. Before, people got married and women were good only to stay stuck in the kitchen cooking. It used to be like that. [laughs]. We were only good for that and for nothing else.*

Antes eu passava o dia inteiro e não fazia nada, só cuidava de casa e dos filhos. (Valdire)

*I used to spend all day doing nothing, I only took care of the house and the children.*

For them, the earnings are important to allow them some independence and respect from their husbands. This dialogue between two female participants shows how having a gainful activity changed their lives:

SONIA: Olha, a minha vida mudou bastante. Porque aqui, nós trabalhando, quanto mais nós vendemos, mais a gente ganha. Então a gente tem o dinheiro da gente e é dono da gente mesmo.

CIDA: Dá pra bater asas sozinha [risos]

SONIA: Ah, eu bato asas e saio [risos]. Verdade. Dá uma renda pra gente que a gente pode fazer alguma coisa.

CIDA: Estava falando pra ela que nós saímos do armário [risos]

SONIA: A gente estava escondidas. Verdade mesmo.

*SONIA: Look, my life changed a lot. Because here, with us working, the more we sell the more we earn. So we have our money and our independence.*

*CIDA: We can be free. [laughs]*

*SONIA: I take off and fly [laughs]. Really. It gives us an income and we can do something.*

*CIDA: I was telling her that we came out of the closet. [laughs]*

*SONIA: We were hidden. Really.*

Some of them use this autonomy to aspire even further, like going back to school or saving money for future plans.

O importante é que eu vim pra cá com minha tristezas, muitas vezes sozinha, e consegui me levantar. Fui estudar, trabalho aqui, tenho meu dinheiro. (...) E quando sai um dinheirinho aqui, tem uma caixinha lá na Caixa Econômica que está crescendo. (Sonia)

*The important thing is that I came here with my sorrows, many times alone, and then I was able to stand on my own feet. I went to school, I work here, I have my money. (...) And when I get some money here, there is a savings account that is growing.*

Being part of a group is something very important for the craftswomen as well. The group provides them with mutual support, and this support has been fundamental to their emancipation – especially at developing new craft competences through mutual help. At the cooperative headquarters, in the town of Guaraqueçaba, women spend the day chatting, telling jokes, and encouraging one another. Their workshop atmosphere is remarkably cheerful.

### **5.1.2. Discussion about craft as a gainful activity**

Understanding the meaning attributed to craft allows us to grasp the artisans' motivation for making handicrafts. At the beginning they were driven by the need for money to survive or to make ends meet. The ability to survive instead of starving, as stated by Sen (1999), is the most fundamental freedom one person can have. The development of all other freedoms requires this fundamental freedom. In other words, food security is a prerequisite for empowerment and human development. Nonetheless, simple food security does not provide the scope for empowerment. As showed in section 2.3.2, receiving economic support from elsewhere can impair the capacity of local cultures to contribute to the well-being of their communities and to deal with the most diverse aspects of daily life. Food security has to be achieved through their own resources, skills and abilities in order to allow for empowerment. In this sense, having a gainful activity – and consequently being able to satisfy their basic needs – has prepared the ground for the artisans' flourishing. Once the basic needs were covered, the artisans could look for other needs, such as the human need for fulfillment.

For the craftswomen, having a gainful activity was itself empowering. According to Sen (1999), women's well-being and empowerment is strongly influenced by the ability to earn an independent income. Sen affirms that working outside the home

and earning an independent income have a clear impact on enhancing women's social standing in their households and communities. This renewed social standing provides the women with the opportunity of working toward their own goals and aspirations. The fact that the craftswomen affirm to have achieved independence and respect from their husbands shows an important level of empowerment.

### 5.1.3. Craft as self-expression and enjoyment

Besides being a gainful activity, craft also means a way of self-expression and enjoyment for the artisans. All the interviewed artisans affirm to enjoy creating handicrafts. In this sense, craft is a vehicle for the artisan's expression.

Artesanato é a sua alma, o seu espírito. É natural, você já vem com isso. Cada um tem aquilo, só falta ela desabrochar. (Ruth)

*Craft is your soul, your spirit. It is something natural that you are born with. Everyone has it, you just have to flourish.*

O momento do artista quando ele está fazendo aquela peça, é o momento de você extravasar. De por em pratica aquilo que existe dentro de si. (Rodrigo)

*The artist's moment is when he is doing that piece, it is the moment to express yourself, to put into practice what exists inside yourself.*

Ah eu gosto! Gosto demais de fazer isso! Porque é uma coisa que é boa pra gente que está numa idade. Que a gente tem que fazer alguma coisa e não ficar parado. Se ficar parado fica doente. (Rosina)

*I love it! Because it is something that is good for us in a certain age. We have to do something instead of being idle. If we are idle we get sick.*

### 5.1.4. Discussion about crafts as self-expression and enjoyment

The second motivation for the artisans to take part in the cooperative is enjoying to craft and seeing craft as a means of self-expression. All the interviewed artisans affirmed that craft is a pleasant activity for them. Even though it is an income source, not every Caiçara in need of money has the vocation to be an artisan. Sonia, a cooperative member, stated that a person has to like to craft in order to thrive in the

cooperative. If a person does not enjoy crafting, there is no point in working there. Many people started making crafts and after a while quit. For example, in Peças village the cooperative included over 10 craftswomen some years ago, and nowadays it counts with only three. Therefore, we can grasp that the second meaning, craft as a means of self-expression and enjoyment, is fundamental. This meaning will not attract people who are looking for a way to make a living – people who are in need. However, the motivation that will keep the artisans working at the cooperative is enjoying to craft and seeing craft as a means of self-expression.

### 5.1.5. Craft as a source of self-esteem

All the participants who actively take part in the cooperative report an increase in their self-esteem and the acknowledgement of their own worth.

**Question: do you feel more worthy in working here [at the cooperative]?**

Com certeza! Querendo ou não, a pessoa olha “nossa, que bonito, vou ficar com esse porque achei lindo”. Ou já encomenda de outra cor, que prefere outra cor. E a gente se sente valorizada pelo serviço que a gente faz.(Valdire)

*For sure! Either you want it or not, when a customer looks and says “that’s pretty, I want this one because I liked it”. Or orders in another colour, because they prefer another colour. And we feel appreciated for the work we do.*

De ver seu trabalho valorizado, a pessoa começa a desabrochar. (Ruth)

*Seeing your work appreciated, the person starts to flourish.*

The craftswomen also enjoy being an example for other women who face difficult life conditions.

**Question: Do you think you are an example for other women in the area?**

Mas claro! Quando elas vêem nossas coisas se admiram, claro, barbaridade. E é um privilégio pra nós, ficamos contentes de saber que estamos aqui fazendo alguma coisa. As mulheres estão se reunindo em comunidades em vários lugares, que é exemplo daqui já. (Sonia)

*Of course! When they see our crafts they get astonished, of course. And it’s a privilege for us, we are happy to know we are here doing something meaningful. Women are getting together in communities in many places, based on the example from here.*

### 5.1.6. Discussion about craft as a source of self-esteem

Empowerment can be understood as a process of change through which the participants gain more control over their life, having their sense of pride, self-worth and dignity enhanced. There is no doubt that the interviewed artisans have experienced many positive changes as a result of their craft and their participation in the cooperative. Their accounts of pride, self-esteem and self-worth are remarkable.

The act of displaying their production at the cooperative stores to the customers view has enabled their sense of self-worth. Most objects admired by the customers show a creative use of recycled materials and renewable resources. Having their artistry and cleverness admired has been a major source of self-esteem and satisfaction. The act of displaying their own creations is considered by Elisabeth Kaine (2004) as fundamental to craftspeople's empowerment. It is what she calls "être vu pour prendre forme" [being seen to take shape].

En plus de donner forme, l'acte de créer permet aussi et surtout de prendre forme comme être distinct. La mise à vue, la présentation de son œuvre, participe au processus de valorisation et d'affirmation de l'identité entrepris par la création. Cette mise à l'épreuve par le regard de l'autre est essentielle à la valorisation du créateur et à la progression de ses compétences. (Kaine & Dubuc, 2010, p.24)

### 5.1.7. Craft as a means of fulfillment

The artisans who really take part in the cooperative activities reported great pride in their achievements. Most of them affirm to feel fulfilled.

**Question: Do you feel fulfilled?**

Ah claro! [risos] também eu digo, não precisa muito pra se realizar. (Cida)

*Of course! [laughs] Like I usually say, you don't need a lot to feel fulfilled.*

Despite their feeling of fulfillment, some cooperative members acknowledge that there are many goals to be achieved in the future.

Já faz 4 ou 5 anos que quanto mais a gente faz, mais a gente vende. Então a gente tem fé de expandir, agora que nós estamos andando com as nossas próprias pernas. Então a gente tem orgulho de saber que estamos fazendo uma coisa que a gente está vendendo. O que a gente fez está aparecendo. E você está investindo em alguma coisa que vai aparecer. Então a gente luta e a gente faz. Importante é que lutando a gente vai conseguindo as coisas, só tende a subir, né? Subir e expandir. (Sonia)

*Since four or five years ago, the more we make, the more we sell. So we believe in expanding, now that we are standing on our own feet. So we are proud to know we are doing something that we can see. And that we are being noticed. And you are investing on something that will have results. So we strive and get things done. The important thing is that by striving we achieve things, it only gets better, right? Better and bigger.*

### **5.1.8. Discussion about craft as a means of fulfillment**

Another important significance of crafts for the cooperative members is being a means of fulfillment. If we believe, as Sen, that what the poor are denied is their fulfillment – the opportunities and the freedom to flourish – the major sign of empowerment is the perception of being fulfilled. The interviewed cooperative members show a great pride in their achievements, side-by-side with being aware that they still have many goals to achieve. The fact that their achievements have encouraged them to aspire to new goals shows how empowering their participation at the cooperative has been.

## **5.2. FUTURE CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY THE COOPERATIVE MEMBERS**

With the end of the partnership with Provopar, the artisans will run the cooperative by themselves and will set their own goals. As Sonia said, now they are standing on their own feet. From 2010 on, the cooperative is the artisans themselves. Shaping their own destiny entails responsibilities, setting goals and making plans. In other words, it demands a well-developed capacity to aspire. As for the cooperative members, their main goal is to expand the cooperative.

O objetivo maior que temos hoje em dia é ver isso aqui deslanchando mesmo. Ter vários grupos trabalhado e vendendo pra fora. E vindo mais pessoas e somando.

(...) Nós estamos nos fortalecendo pra começar a produzir mais ainda, começar a exportar. (Ruth)

*The main objective we have nowadays is to see the cooperative thriving. Having many groups working and selling to other places. And more people coming and adding to our work.*

*(...) We are becoming stronger in order to start producing even more and start to export.*

But to achieve this goal they have identified some important challenges to be overcome: cooperation, marketing channels, productive capacity and cultural revitalization. The participants identified these challenges spontaneously, as they were only asked about their aspirations and future plans. Another challenge – the visual supports to convey essential information to the customers – emerged in our conversations and then I probed into this topic.

## Cooperation

The challenge of cooperation is to make many different people work together with the same goal. Even though cooperation has been an inherent part of Caiçara subsistence activities, working in a business, using a cooperative system, is something new to most artisans. Several craftspeople, which do not take part in the cooperative, related that the internal conflicts in the cooperative are the main reason that keeps them away.

O mutirão é onde os moradores do local combinavam de fazer uma colheita, uma plantação, então as atividades do plantio de arroz eram divididas entre as famílias, todas as famílias se ajudavam. E no final da colheita, festejavam com a festa do fandango. Mas essa tradição se perdeu. (...) Daí quando você vai falar de cooperação hoje em dia, é como se isso nunca tivesse existido. Porque o mutirão era basicamente para a subsistência e quando você fala de um empreendimento, de uma cooperativa, que é uma empresa, então já muda um pouco. As pessoas aqui tem aquele imediatismo, ela não quer fazer nada se não tiver um retorno rápido, devido até mesmo à necessidade dela. Então falta essa compreensão maior do que é uma cooperativa.

(...) É muito complicado você fazer um artesão ter noção de que isso aqui [a cooperativa] pertence a ele, que isso aqui foi feito pra ele, que ele é dono. Ele não tem noção de que o espaço é dele. Então é esse empoderamento, é essa participação dele, que é o crucial e que é o motor de todo o sistema cooperativista. (Rodrigo)

*The collective work [mutirão] was when the locals planned to harvest, to plow, so the rice cropping activities were divided between the families and all the families helped one another. At the end of the harvest, they celebrated with a fandango ball. But this tradition has been lost. (...) Then when you talk about cooperation nowadays, it's as if it had never existed. Because mutirão was mainly for subsistence and when you mention an enterprise, a cooperative, which is a business, it is different. People here have a sense of urgency, they don't want to do anything if it doesn't give them an immediate profit, due to their need. So they lack this bigger understanding of what a cooperative is.*

*(...) It is very complicated to make an artisan understand that this [the cooperative] belongs to them, that this has been made for them, that they own it. They don't understand that this is their space. So this is empowerment, this is their participation, which is crucial and that moves all the cooperative system.*



## Marketing channels

With the end of the partnership with Provopar in December 2010, the cooperative now has to market its own production. The supervisors say that they know the challenge they have ahead of them, because they must work hard to make up for the absence of Provopar, especially considering that they do not have stores in a big city anymore. Now they need to look for new marketing channels and opportunities.

A Provopar tinha uma loja, que eles vão fechar [foi fechada em outubro de 2010]. Agora somos nós que temos que começar a ir atrás de mercado. (Ruth)

*Provopar had a store that they are going to close. [it was closed in October 2010]. Now we are the ones who have to start looking for markets.*

Nós vamos começar a colocar também para vender através da internet. A internet que é um meio de fazer uma divulgação. E nos prepararmos também para na hora que vender ter o produto. (Ruth)

*We are also going to start selling over the internet. The web is a way to promote our business. And we need to get ready so that when we sell we have the product in stock.*

## Productive capacity

The cooperative members understand that looking for new markets entails increasing their productive capacity, because they have to keep a stock of crafts available for sale or distribution.

Uma de nossas metas agora é de fazer funcionar os setores. Ter um coordenador de cada setor, para dar desenvolvimento. Os setores estarem produzindo e ter tantas peças prontas, tantas folhas na loja, tantas cerâmicas ali, tantos tapetes ali. Na hora que houver um pedido, ter como entregar. (Ruth)

*One of our goals now is to make the sections [pottery, weaving, paper] work. Having a supervisor for each section, to develop them. The sections need to produce and have this many pieces, this many sheets, this many rugs ready. When we receive an order, we can deliver the products.*

Improving their productive capacity also means integrating artisans from the whole region of Guaraqueçaba, the several Caiçara communities and the Guarani community. The cooperative, in this sense, is considered a display of the region culture and a means of bringing prosperity to isolated and impoverished communities.

Trabalhamos com a região todinha, não só a sede em Guaraqueçaba, tem em toda parte. Tem o canal. Eles produzem lá, trazem até aqui pra vender. E quando tem projetos de oficinas, tal, a gente convoca eles para participar. Eles estão sempre integrados conosco. (Ruth)

*We work with all the area, not only the headquarters in Guaraqueçaba, everywhere. We are the channel. They produce there [in the communities] and bring here to sell. And when we have workshop projects and courses, we invite them to participate. They are always interacting with us.*

Nas comunidades, se você andar de comunidade em comunidade você encontra pessoas que são capacitadas, que dominam uma arte. Só falta só a gente começar a trazer. Chegar até lá e começar a trazer. Porque tem muitos artistas escondidos na região. (Ruth)

*In the communities, if you go from community to community, you can find talented people that master their craft or art. The only thing they need is for us to start bringing [their crafts to the store]. Because there are lots of artists hidden in the countryside.*

A gente se realiza vendo o trabalho deles [das comunidades] sendo vendido. (Ida)

*We feel fulfilled when we see their work being sold.*

## Cultural revitalization

Valorizing Caiçara culture is a fundamental goal to the cooperative members. But they often use the term ‘cultural revitalization’, because Caiçara culture has been much damaged during the last decades. Seeing that many traditions and knowledge have almost vanished, the cooperative sets the revitalization of local culture as an import goal.

É importante porque quando a gente fala em preservar o meio ambiente, não é só o natural, não é só a floresta e bichinhos, mas a cultura também do local, as pessoas que vivem, a pesca artesanal, desde a construção de uma canoa ao feitiço de uma rede. Então são essas coisas que são únicas e que acho que é muito egoísmo da nossa parte deixar morrer e deter esse conhecimento. Acho que as pessoas que estão envolvidas na cooperativa tem que ter uma mentalidade de divulgar isso, valorizar isso. E não ter vergonha de ser Caiçara. É a minha cultura. (Rodrigo)

*It is important because when we talk about preserving the environment, it is not only the nature, not only the forest and animals, but also preserving the local culture, the people that live here, artisanal fishing, since the making of a canoe to the making of a fishing net. So these things are unique and I think it would be selfish of us to let this knowledge vanish. I think that the people involved in the cooperative must have the mentality of spreading it, valorizing it. And not to be ashamed of being Caiçara. This is my culture.*

The cooperative is planning to take advantage of the spacious building in the town of Guaraqueçaba to organize exhibitions and festivals with local artists.

O fandango no município, de uns anos pra cá, está sendo resgatado. Que é uma tradição essa. Esse mês mesmo vai começar uma exposição do fandango, já com parceria conosco, em que eles vão deixar por 10 dias os instrumentos expostos aqui. Vai ter um fandanguero que vai estar explicando. (Ruth)

*Fandango in the municipality, since a few years ago, started being revived. That is a tradition. This month there will be a fandango exhibition, in partnership with us, in which the fandango masters are going to leave their instruments on show here. A fandango master will be here giving explanations.*

The cooperative has reserved its mezzanine to exhibit the work of the region masters – who Ruth calls *natural-born artists*. That space preserves Guaraqueçaba craft and artistic heritage.

Essas panelas aqui são da senhorinha Romão. É de Medeiros. Esse que é o resgate da nossa região. Você vê que ela faz isso tudo a mão. Esses aqui de antigamente eles faziam. Esse aqui também foi a Senhorinha que fez, que são os chumbeiros. (Ruth)

*These pans were made by Senhorinha Romão from Medeiros. That is the revival of our traditions. You can see she makes all this by hand. People used to make those like that. This also has been made by Senhorinha, those are the weights for cast nets.*

**IMAGE 40:** the mezzanine. **IMAGE 41:** Clay sculpture from some of the local *natural-born artists*, such as Dona Yolanda and Gilson Crespo Anastácio. **IMAGE 42:** Senhorinha's weights for cast nets. **IMAGE 43:** Senhorinha's pan, the local pottery icon.



## Communication with the customers

The cooperative costumers want to be informed about the materials and the techniques behind the objects. When they arrive at the cooperative store, they ask lots of questions and the artisans have to explain them orally.

E eu tive que falar pra ela todas as coisas do que era feito. Ela comprou várias coisas, mas eu tive que explicar tudo pra ela do que era feito. Faz pouco tempo também veio uma mulher junto com uma outra da Espanha, e ela faz questão de pegar todo o nome e escrever todos os nomes das coisas. [...] E eles querem levar, mas querem saber pra contar pros outros do que é feito. Então a gente tem que saber de tudo, pra vender de tudo. (Sonia)

*I had to tell her [the client] what everything was made of. She bought many objects, but I had to explain what everything was made of. Recently, another woman, with a Spanish friend, took note of all the names. [...] They wanted to buy, but also to be informed in order to be able of telling other people what the objects were made of. So, in order to sell everything, we need to know everything.*

I asked the cooperative supervisor, Ruth Liberato, about the lack of labels and other visual supports explaining what the products were made of. Ruth acknowledged this lack; without any doubt, information about materials and techniques should be available to clients. However, she told me an even more serious problem is conveying Caiçara culture. Ruth says it would be important to tell the clients about the *natural-born artists* who created the objects.

As pessoas hoje gostam de saber a procedência, né? É de quem, do que é feito... Tipo aqui essa peça feita pela dona Yolanda tal, a pessoa mora em tal comunidade... sabe, fazer um histórico dela [...]. Aquele artista nato mesmo, de tradição, tem que ter isso aí. Porque é isso que dá o resgate cultural, isso que é valor cultural. (Ruth)

*People want to know the origin, don't they? Who created it, what it is made of... For example, this piece is made by Dona Yolanda, she lives in so and so community... you know, tell her story [...] Natural-born artists, rooted in their tradition, must have it [a visual medium to convey their story]. Because it allows cultural recovery, this is the real cultural value.*

### 5.2.1 Discussion about the future challenges

In order to revitalize Caiçara culture, they wish to convey to the customers who the great artists - the creative sources of the communities - are. In this case, marketing their own production means much more than selling or advertising it. Crafts have a great meaning to the person who makes them, and this meaning should be available to the

consumers (Lima, 2010). It is necessary to sensitize and inform consumers about the culture that produced the object (Leite, 2005; Sampaio, 2005; Vencatachellum, 2005). In general, tourists who visit Guaraqueçaba because of its impressive fauna and flora have none or little knowledge about the local culture, and often ignore the links between the diversity of ecosystems and cultural diversity. They have never been informed about that, and people only respect and value what they know (Borges, 2010). As Leite says, it is our responsibility to provide the market with information about the value and meaning of the crafts. In doing so, we are creating a public to these objects and spreading Caiçara culture.

It is remarkable how the cooperative members, who work at its headquarters, are articulated and possess a well-developed capacity to aspire, being able to speak clearly about their goals and the plans to achieve them, projecting themselves in the future. The supervisors have a critical sense about what has to be improved at the cooperative. It is noticeable that taking part in the decisions and management of the cooperative is highly empowering.

One question arises: how can this empowerment be spread to the traditional communities of Guaraqueçaba? The cooperative supervisors have plans to integrate the entire region through the cooperative. However, the nature of each artisan's cooperation may vary. Some artisans who live very far from the Town of Guaraqueçaba may not be able of taking part in the cooperative management due to the distance, but they might dedicate their time to produce regularly. Is this commitment to creation and production as empowering as the cooperative management? This research does not have enough data to evaluate this matter. However if we take Sen's thinking as a reference – that development involves enhancing and enriching the lives that people are able to lead – a person's freedom to effectively choose one kind of life rather than another is one of the main goals of empowerment. Consequently, the cooperative's supporting role in the craftspeople's empowerment is providing them with the opportunity to choose the kind of life they want to lead – such as being an artist in a distant community, or living in the town and running the cooperative, going to college to learn marketing skills or living in the woods.

For the artisans who live close to the cooperative headquarters, craftsmanship seems to be an important means of empowerment. There is no doubt that the artisans who run the cooperative have become empowered to a certain degree. To evaluate their degree of empowerment, we would need further researches. Especially, further researches are necessary on evaluating how empowering the cooperative is to the artisans who

live in the communities far from the Town of Guaraqueçaba. The communities' populations are the most severely affected by the environmental restrictions, in other words, the most disempowered by the environmental policies. And, because of the transportation difficulties, they do not have the same chances of taking part in running the cooperative – that has been proved to be a very empowering activity – as the urban Caiçaras. Exactly because of the transportation and lodging difficulties, this study was not able to probe into the fishing communities empowerment.

### 5.3. GUARAQUEÇABA CULTURAL IDENTITY TRANSLATED IN CRAFTS

The participants were asked about the distinctive features of Caiçara crafts in Guaraqueçaba. This question seemed very abstract to many participants, and nobody had a simple answer.

De Guaraqueçaba, aqui mesmo, podemos dizer... é difícil dizer. As peças são muito diferentes. (Ruth)

*From Guaraqueçaba, from here, we can say... it's hard to say. The pieces are very different.*

So they were asked about which crafts were typical of Guaraqueçaba.

A gente tem aqui o fandango, que é a nossa forma tradicional de dança. O artesanato de um mestre é um artesanato pro fandango. Lá ele produz os tamancos de madeira, a rabeca, que é uma espécie de um violino, a viola e todos os apetrechos do fandango. (Renato)

*Here we have fandango, which is our traditional dance form. A master's craft is a craft for fandango. There, he produces the wooden clogs, the rebec, which is a kind of violin, the guitar and all other fandango instruments.*

At the cooperative headquarters, some artisans tried to identify the local craft icons:

RUTH: é a panela senhorinha [de cerâmica, feitas por dona Senhorinha Romão]. E o fandango, né? Os instrumentos do fandango.

RODRIGO: O trabalho de caxeta (todos concordam)

ARTISAN: Quer dizer, esculturas. A panela senhorinha, escultura na caxeta e a cestaria. Que é uma característica daqui.

RODRIGO: E que é tudo utilitário. Que nem, usavam cipó para fazer uma peneira, cerâmica para fazer uma panela, então isso que é característico.



*RUTH: It's Senhorinha's pan. [pottery, made by Senhorinha Romão] And fandango, right? The fandango instruments.*

*RODRIGO: The wooden crafts [with caxeta, a local wood used to make sculptures, canoes and fandango instruments].*

*ARTISAN: I mean, sculptures. Senhorinha's pan [image 43], caxeta sculptures and basket weaving [image 36]. They are typical crafts from here.*

*RODRIGO: And everything that is utilitarian. Like, they used liana to make sieves [image 5], clay to make pans, so this is typical.*

The participants were asked then what characterizes local crafts and the answers were very similar:

Taí, é de saber aproveitar da natureza, o que ela solta, o que você catar, tudo é aproveitado, vai a tua criação transformar aquilo numa peça. (Ruth)

*That's it, it's knowing how to make use of what nature gives you, what you find. Everything is used, it depends on your creativity to transform that into a piece.*

É que daqui a gente faz, já no quintal. Que nem eu, eu cato, eu tenho uma palmeira, já cato aquilo ali e já faço. A bananeira também tiro do quintal. Você trabalha com alguma coisa que você já acha e já usa. É a matéria-prima do coisa, da garrafa. Não se deixa ir pro lixo. O papel é feito também da bananeira, já se faz luminária, várias coisas. É usar o que a natureza produz. (Ida)

*It's what we make from here, from our backyard. Like me, I pick things up, I have a palm tree, I pick something there and make a piece. The banana tree I also take from my backyard. You work with something you find and make use of it. It's the raw material of things, of bottles. You don't throw them away. The paper is also made of the banana tree, you can make paper lanterns, many things. It's using what nature gives you.*

### 5.3.1 Discussion about cultural identity translated in crafts

These were not the answers that I was expecting to hear. At the beginning I thought that the question was not well formulated, so I tried to reformulate it in many different ways. I thought that maybe the participants had not understood the question, or that they had not known how to answer the question. It took me months and the contact with a Quebec's First Nation, the Atikamekw, to understand that I had the good answers.

When we talk about cultural identity translated into crafts, we usually consider the symbolic aspect – the symbols, motifs, shapes, colors, etc. (Borges, 2010; Vencatachellum, 2005). We also may consider crafts technological aspect, involving the technical skills

and the materials that a culture traditionally draws on. Furthermore, we may consider the rituals and uses, or the aesthetic aspect. However, none of the participants answered me in these terms. Either they described objects categories – such as rebec, canoe, clog, pan or basket – or they said that what characterizes Guaraqueçaba crafts was the use of local available resources – creating something with whatever they find in their territory, making use of whatever nature provides them with.

At first, their notion of culture – as a way of using the resources available in their local environment – seemed strange to me. It just started to make sense when I attended a focus group, conducted by Elisabeth Kaine, with Atikamekw elders in Manawan (Quebec, in March 30, 2011). When asked about the distinguishing features of Atikamekw Nation, their answers were strikingly similar to the answers that I had listened from the Caiçara artisans in Guaraqueçaba. First, they mentioned their objects – such as snowshoes, baskets and canoes – to come to the conclusion that what characterized the Atikamekw nation were their objects. And they stated that their objects are different from other nations objects because their territory is different, what they find in each territory is different and, consequently, their objects are different. Here we have an extract of the focus group:

#### **Spécificités de la nation atikamekw**

Il y a beaucoup de choses, nos raquettes sont différentes. Par exemple Opticiwan, il n'y a pas beaucoup de bois là, mais ils ont survécu quand même, ils faisaient des raquettes soit avec du bouleau ou du bouleau jaune, il y en a d'autres qu'ils l'ont fait avec de l'érable, plus solide.

Je pense que c'est pour ça que chaque nation est différente, à cause des différences du territoire. À la base les autochtones ont la même philosophie, la même façon de vivre. Ce sont les objets qui nous caractérisent, nous différencient des autres nations. Il y a des objets communs aux autres comme le couteau-croche mais il y a aussi des différences dans ces outils. Ils se sont débrouillés avec ce qu'ils trouvaient dans leur milieu.

#### ***Specificities of the Atikamekw Nation***

*There are many things, our snowshoes are different. For example, in Opticiwan there is not a lot of wood, but they survived anyway; they made snowshoes with either birch or yellow birch. There are others who made them with maple, which is more solid.*

*I think that is the reason why each nation is different, because of the differences in the territories. In essence the Amerindians have the same philosophy, the same way of life. The objects are what distinguish us from other nations. There are common objects, such as the crooked knife, but there are differences in those tools. Each nation has managed with what they found in their territory.*



Latter on, this topic was discussed with Jacques Newashish (personal communication, June 28, 2011), an Atikamekw artist who took part in the focus group. He stated that nature is never the same, each territory is unique; in each territory you find different resources and that each people has managed with them. As mentioned in the second chapter, one of the distinguishing features of traditional cultures, such as Caiçara and Atikamekw, is the notion of territory. They have evolved in connection with a specific territory. Therefore, culture is conceived in terms of the use of local available resources, as people's meaning in their territory. Renato Caiçara tried to explain that to me in my first day of fieldwork in Guaraqueçaba.

O artesanato é a expressão do sentido da pessoa ali. É importante que você consiga entender esse universo, essa forma de cultura deles, para que você possa entender o artesanato que essa pessoa faz. (Renato)

*Craft is the expression of one's meaning in that place. It would be important for you to understand this universe, this form of culture, so that you will be able to understand the craft that this person makes.*

Therefore, understanding a person's universe, his or her environment, allows us to understand his or her culture. So often we see worldviews that conceive nature and culture as opposites, and here we see a conception of culture in which nature is an essential part. Rodrigo has an important opinion about the role of culture:

E esse é um dos papeis da cultura, valorizar o cidadão no seu ambiente. Os objetos carregam um conhecimento empírico. Os materiais tem desde uma data certa para serem coletados, uma fase da lua. Uma coisa assim tem todo um saber popular muito grande.

*And that is one of the roles of culture, valorizing the citizen in their environment. The objects carry empirical knowledge. The materials have a certain date to be collected, a specific moon phase. Something like that requires a huge folk knowledge.*

We can understand from this discussion that nature is essentially context-specific. The concept 'nature' is a counterpoint to human and human-made, but 'nature' as an unspecific, general and universal noun does not have tangible existence. What exists is many different species living and adapting to different environments (different climates, different soils and reliefs), in numerous complex ecosystems. Preserving "the nature" means preserving living beings, different species. But we, humans, we are one only species – we all have the same brain structures, the same reflexes, we are all creative beings. What made us develop into different cultures were the different environmental conditions that forced us to continually adapt and

be creative. Our cultural differences are the testimony of the diversity of conditions in our planet and the different challenges that each and every territory made humans overcome. Moreover, the specificity of nature is exactly the meaning of protecting Guaraqueçaba natural environment, since most of its plants and animals are found nowhere else on Earth.

### 5.3.2 Using cultural and natural resources to adapt to new circumstances

The restrictions on the traditional practices of using natural resources – the backbone of Caiçara culture – disabled Caiçaras' autonomy for securing their necessities of life. This heteronomy constituted the major challenge for Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative, as its main goal was to provide local artisans with a livelihood. The artisans responded to the challenge brought by the restrictions on the use of natural resources by identifying the available and non-restricted resources and crafting objects from them. The craftswomen started to create crafts with trash, shells, nuts, seeds, etc. [images 44 to 51]. Caiçaras already had a long tradition of reusing materials in the communities (recycling and upcycling). Reusing materials is an important value for the participants; they show pride in using any material they find:

Aqui tudo se aproveita. (Rosina)

*Here everything is reused.*

Tudo se aproveita. (Ida)

*Everything is reused.*

A gente aproveita de tudo aqui. (Valdire)

*We use everything here.*

Provopar has introduced the techniques to use banana tree fiber and fish-scales – two abundant resources in Guaraqueçaba that used to be seen as waste. Besides the techniques and materials introduced by Provopar, the artisans developed their own techniques to use the region abundant resources. Many of these resources used to be ignored by the artisans before the cooperative.

Com o que tem por aqui a gente faz. Com essa casca aí é de coqueiro. É daqueles coquinhos miudinhos. (Rosina)

*We make things with what we have here. This bark is from the coconut tree. Those little tiny coconuts. [image 44]*

Nós conhecemos como usar a matéria prima que temos em abundância aqui e vamos cada vez descobrindo outras coisas que dá para fazer. Que nem eu, fui descobrir essa fibra de bananeira depois de quanto tempo! A escama do peixe, que ninguém pensava em usar. As flores são tão lindas! A gente tinha sempre em abundância e nunca sabia o que pudesse fazer com ela. Mas agora você vê os trabalhos, que coisa linda! (Ida)

*We got to know how to use the material that is abundant here and we often discover new things that we can make. Like me, I discovered this banana tree fiber after so long. And the fish scales, nobody thought about using them. The fish scale flowers are so pretty! We always had plenty of them and never knew what to do with them. But now you see the crafts, they are so beautiful!*

With the increase of industrialized goods consumption, trash becomes an increasingly abundant resource. And the artisans have taken advantage of it, for example, making many objects using PET bottles.

Sente aqui para você ver o conforto. Tem outro ali. Olha que bonito aquele ali. É a mesma coisa. É confortável. Você pega 32 garrafas e embute uma na outra, daí fica 16. (Ida)

*Sit here to see how comfortable it is. There is another one there. Look how pretty that one is. It's the same thing. It's comfortable. You take 32 bottles and put one inside another, then you have 16.*

Wood extraction has been restricted, so the artisans made the stool structure of 32 PET bottles [images 48-49]. Often they mix wasted materials with crochet [image 50].

A vasilha do amaciante de roupas. Daí é bordado. Com a PET também dá pra fazer. Isso é uma coisa que dá para aproveitar da natureza, tirar do lixo. (Ida)

*The fabric softener bottle. Then it is embroidered. You can also use PET bottles. This is something that you can take from nature, take out of the trash.*

The artisans also translated the traditional technique of weaving liana in the weaving of wasted materials – such as old magazines and plastic bags [images 46 and 51].

### 5.3.3 Discussion about the use of natural and cultural resources

This process of developing techniques to reuse waste led to the recognition that there are no limits for creativity, because any available resource can be used to create new objects. This awareness may be considered an emancipation through design (the creative human power). Seeing their creations and the pride they show of

**IMAGE 44:** Lamps made with tiny-coconut trees. **IMAGE 45:** Ornament made with fish-scales and shells, next to it, a curtain made of seeds and wooden chips. These crafts were displayed at Peças village cooperative store.



**IMAGE 46:** hats made of old magazines. **IMAGE 47:** figurines made with shells and other discarded materials. These crafts were made by dona Narzira, in Superagüi village.



**IMAGES 48 & 49:** A stool covered with woven banana fiber, its structure is made of 32 PET bottles. **IMAGE 50:** home utensils made with fabric softener bottle and crochet. These crafts were made at the town of Guaraqueçaba.



In Peças village. **IMAGE 51:** a rug made of woven plastic bags. **IMAGE 52:** miniature of a cast net made by Azito.





their cleverness and artistry, there is no doubt that design – our ability to be world-transformative and world-creative – can be an important means of empowerment.

We can discuss in this case our relation with the objects, which is essentially cultural. Conceiving objects to be used for a certain period of time, and then to be discarded, is a key feature of modern culture - even when we send an object to recycling. From the moment we throw an object into the recycling bin, we establish the end of life for that object. Its materials may be recycled and converted in new materials that will be used to make new products, but the original object itself usually does not have a continued existence.

Basically, what the Caiçaras show us is a different relationship with objects. Available materials are at hand to be used and reused. Any material that is at hand is a resource, even if in other contexts this very same resource may be considered as trash. Discarded objects became part of the local resources, to the point that they refer to reusing trash as “taking it from nature”. For the Caiçaras, the objects that they find in their territories can always have new uses attributed to them. In this sense, one of Caiçara distinguishing features is their relationship with the available resources.

#### **5.4. NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF THE COOPERATIVE ON LOCAL CULTURE**

The members of the communities had some criticism in regard to the people Provopar chose to work with. The criticism was that Provopar, as a public institution, needed to report accounts of what was being achieved. In other words, it needed to show numbers and, many times, the quantity of artisans was more important than the quality. Many people have been encouraged to take part in the workshops to learn a new skill because they were in need, but the institution did not give special attention to the few local craft masters. For the cooperative members, the cooperative should have had a greater regard for the great artists and craft masters that used to be the most respected people in their communities.

Muitas pessoas que deveriam ser valorizadas e ser incentivadas, até custeadas, foram deixadas de lado. Isso eu acredito que tenha sido uma falha.

*Many people, who should have been valorized and encouraged, even financially supported, were left aside. That I believe has been a mistake.*

Tem artistas em Guaraqueçaba que são fantásticos. Como o Renato Caiçara, ele não é cooperado. Porque? Não faltou um elo? Não faltou alguma coisa aí?

*There are amazing artists in Guaraqueçaba, like Renato Caiçara and he is not in the cooperative. Why? Isn't there a link missing? Isn't there something missing?*

Talvez fosse mais fácil expandir a cooperativa se tivéssemos investido nos grandes artistas para estar disseminando. Aquela coisa de Jesus Cristo. Ele viu os doze apóstolos e depois isso foi multiplicando até hoje. E estamos até hoje aí com a Igreja Católica. E tudo começou com doze. Então ele investiu o maior tempo dele, os maiores discursos, os maiores ensinamento dele foram para os doze. E dos doze ainda tinham os três mais próximos. Então eles sabia como agir com os três mais próximos, com os doze e com a multidão. Essa coisa [de valorizar os grandes artistas locais] que faltou.

*Maybe it would have been easier to expand the cooperative if we had invested in the great artists to spread the crafts. That Jesus Christ thing. He saw the twelve apostles and then started multiplying until today. And we have the Catholic Church until today. And everything started with twelve. So, he invested most of his time and the longest speeches, the greatest teachings were for the twelve. And from the twelve he had the three that were the closest. So he knew how to act with the closest three, with the twelve and with the crowd. This thing [recognizing the great local artisans] was missing.*

In the point of view of one of Guaraqueçaba great artists, Renato Caiçara, the cooperative approach often renders local crafts uniform. The craftswomen who learned new skills are encouraged to pass what they learned to other people, in general in other communities, as a result of taking part in the cooperative. One good example is the fish-scale flowers. Few years ago, Provopar introduced the technique for using fish-scale, especially for making decorative flowers. Quickly, fish-scale flowers become widespread handicrafts in the islands, to the point that some artisans only produce fish-scale flowers nowadays.

A cooperativa faz com que as artesãs ensinem o que elas já aprenderam, repassem o conhecimento. Só que acaba gerando isso que você vê, que é a uniformização. Tirando a diversidade. Acaba que fica assim, é para fazer flor de escama, é para fazer bonequinho de concha... (Renato)

*The cooperative makes the artisans teach what they learned, pass on their knowledge. But that generates what you see, the crafts are uniform. It takes away the diversity. In the end, it becomes like this, they make fish-scale flowers, they make shell figurines...*

### 5.4.1 Discussion about the negative impacts

In any social intervention there is always a negative lesson to be learned. Paula (2004) affirms that no development project is perfect; on the contrary, it is always an opportunity for learning some lessons. In this case, the negative lesson was the targeted craftspeople. The cooperative members believe it would be more efficient and more empowering if the approach had targeted Guaraqueçaba best artists and artisans – the local masters – because it would facilitate cultural transmission and revitalization.

A master's knowledge and artistry have a symbolic component that has to be reinforced; they are a symbol of Caiçara culture. If we understand culture as the meaning of people in their environment, the master is a symbol of this meaning, a symbol of a healthy relation with their environment. This symbolic component should not be valued as a museum piece, as we worship our monuments from the past. The importance of valorizing the master's artistry is bringing its importance back to the present, as something useful for the future. In a Caiçara community the master used to be the most respected person, therefore the master was the aim for the youngster aspirations. In a region so impoverished as Guaraqueçaba, the masters also suffer from deprivation and distress. Therefore the model for people's aspirations moves to outside of the community.

Young people look for new models for their development, and usually they aspire the urban-modern model. The spread of television has an important role in this process by leading people to compare themselves with celebrities, movie stars and TV characters rather than their neighbors (Michaelis, 2000) – comparing what they have and how they look like. Paulo Freire (2005) affirmed that aspiring to look like the ruling class is one of the characteristics of oppression, and an important obstacle for their emancipation. This aspiration to look like urban people is especially noticeable in Peças Village, the most successful of the three visited fishing communities – in terms of income-generation alternative to fishing –, where young people clearly do not want to look like Caiçaras. This circumstance shows how important it is to valorize Caiçara culture as something that belongs to the future, something that they have a reason to aspire for. The cooperative members believe that the great local artist may have an important role in this process. Investing on the local masters denotes that the cooperative will try to provide them with the conditions to thrive under the present circumstances, the conditions to develop themselves using their artistry and in line with their values, and to regain their prominent role in spreading Caiçara culture. Valorizing the great artists may entail in motivating the young Caiçaras to



follow them and learn with them, and allow the emergence of an alternative model of development, rooted on local values.

There is another topic that needs to be discussed. Because the cooperative is focused mainly on craftswomen, it turned out to alienate men's knowledge and skills. Usually men's crafts are connected to the productive process, in activities such as fishing and fandango. Craftsmen produce fishing nets, canoes, fandango instruments – objects that have always been linked with their subsistence activities. If we understand Caiçara culture as a relation with its territory, revitalizing Caiçara culture entails revitalizing men's crafts as well.

In Peças village, Azito (husband of one of the cooperative members) bashfully produces some cast net miniatures and puts them for sale at the cooperative store [image 52]. That is a timid initiative of making object for sale using men's traditional crafts. This study believes that men's artistry should be well represented at the cooperative as well as women's, so that there would really be a valorization of Caiçara's lifestyle.

## 5.5 GENERAL DISCUSSION

At the introduction we proposed that this is a study about means. We explored craftsmanship as a means of empowerment, in other words how the activities of crafting and taking part in Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative may provide the scope to the artisans' empowerment. Empowerment is an essential component of human development, we can see it as its driving force, as its engine. Empowerment is all about supporting the capacity of people, in general destitute or marginalized people, to gain control over their lives and become agents of their own development.

Before concluding this research, one question arose. From what was seen in the field, is empowerment the end that we are looking for?

If we really wish that empowerment be the end, the desirable outcome in interventions amid destitute populations around the world, we have to investigate its possible effects. Since Guaraqueçaba population lives amid an EPA, any development is supposed

to be sustainable. In other words, it is supposed to remedy the impoverishment of Caiçara communities and the consequent social problems in a manner that does not damage the natural environment. Any factor that disturbs this equation is easily noticed in Guaraqueçaba. And what was observed in the field is that empowerment might have the unintended side effect of increasing consumption.

In Peças village, the women have been empowered, in the sense that they see themselves as warriors that – through their agency – changed their status in the Caiçara society, that created associations and cooperatives that are thriving and, consequently, improving their living conditions. And all the result of their empowerment – of their active participation in collective endeavors – has been translated concretely in consumption. Their empowerment produced local development, but it has led to seeking western comfort and to consuming many, many more industrialized goods than before (we must remember that Caiçara lifestyle used to be sustainable till about 20 years ago). When they achieve the power to effectively choose the kind of life they want to lead – the main goal of empowerment – generally they end up choosing to lead a life as modern as possible. Entering the modern way of life, “life choices tend to be considered as choices among marketable goods” (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008, p.16).

This aspect is fundamental in the case of Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative, or to any intervention to support a traditional population’s empowerment. If development is to be always related to economic growth, if the template for happiness is the possession of goods, a main successful outcome will always be an increase in their power to consume. Regardless if the intervention is based on the use of environmentally friendly materials – or if it aims to reduce social injustices – the template for collective ambitions continues to be a “having” form of well-being. If we do not create-imagine-stimulate new models for people’s aspirations, development will only end up by increasing unsustainability.

The role of culture in sustainable development is arguable. Some reflections arose in the field. First and foremost, culture is about meaning. Culture provides meaning to what we are, do, make and create (Sampaio, 2003; Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002). Development is itself a cultural construction, as Eade (2002) affirmed, so we can attribute new meanings to it.

This case indicates that we need to accept and create different meanings for the word ‘development’. This statement agrees with Ehrenfeld (2008) when he says “to create

sustainability, we must first adopt new meanings for the words we use to tell our stories” (p.xix). Also it agrees with Walker (2010) that sustainability requires a shift in our values and priorities.

Our modern society is attached to a notion of development based on linear economic growth. However, linear economic growth and sustainability are incompatible (as showed in the second chapter). That is the reason why some design theorist, as Fry and Ehrenfeld, criticize the expression “sustainable development”. Fry (2003) says this expression is an oxymoron, as the common meaning of development is irreconcilable with sustainability – Orr (2002) also affirms something similar. For Ehrenfeld (2008) sustainable development is a tool “that suggests new means but still old ends”. In this case, the ends are economic growth (at the macro level) and possessing and consuming goods (at the individual level). Sustainable development, to be real, cannot keep the same notion of development, added to some environmental and social cares – or environmental and social Band-Aids, using Orr’s (2002) and Ehrenfeld’s (2008) expression .

“A lively culture is both a heritage and a project. It gives meaning and direction” (Verhelst & Tyndale, 2002, p.11). At issue here is the direction that our collective aspirations aim. Nyamjoh and Warnier (as cited in UNESCO, 2009) affirm that the media conveys a seductive image of modernity, providing a template for collective ambitions. What is the direction for most collective ambitions? Individually possessing and consuming goods, and the consequent comfort that those goods provide us with. One of the most seductive aspects of modernity is the comfort that industrialized goods can bring us (Manzini, 2005). And the pursuit for comfort was something frequently mentioned by the informants in the field, in Guaraqueçaba. Of course we cannot be hypocrites and say that they cannot consume industrialized goods because they belong to a traditional culture. As Manzini (2006) affirms, consumption is their sacrosanct right, since this is what others do and what is daily promised to them through the media. Consumption is the template for happiness and human ambitions in our era (Ehrenfeld, 2008; Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008; Walker, 2010). Therefore, this study proposes that the role of culture as a cross-cutting pillar of sustainable development is to create-imagine-stimulate new meanings for the word ‘development’ and new templates for collective aspirations, new models of happiness, new ways or finding fulfillment, new directions to project ourselves into future.

How can we change something that is part of our cultural matrix, of our system of beliefs through which we perceive the world? We can take advantage of cross

cultural contacts to rethink our notions of well-being, fulfillment and flourishing. What means the good life for other cultures? How people from different cultures and traditions fulfill themselves? Cross-cultural exchanges are opportunities to rethink our meanings. If sustainability will only be achieved through cultural change (Ehrenfeld, 2008; Orr, 2002; Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008), UNESCO (2009) affirms that cultural change can best be managed through intercultural dialogue. Amartya Sen stresses the importance of intercultural dialogue to human development:

Indeed, one of the most important roles of culture lies in the possibility of learning from each other, rather than celebrating or lamenting the rigidly delineated cultural boxes in which the people of the world are firmly classified by muscular taxonomists. (Sen, 2004)

In this sense, we can see intercultural dialogues as a means to create new ends.

### **5.5.1. Dialogue for sustainable development**

In the review of literature, this study has often found the word 'dialogue'. In talking about empowerment and emancipatory approaches, the term 'dialogue' is very often present (from Freire to Kaine to Jupp & Ali). In case studies of interventions involving designers – in the western sense – and artisans – from traditional cultures –, or in articles about design and traditional craft, the expression 'dialogue between designers and artisans' is often used as well (Borges, 2011; Vencatachellum, 2005). The approach to development may either be enabling, empowering and emancipatory, or be an income-generation project – or both. Regardless of the approach, dialogue here has always one direction: one group helps the other.

A dialogue, I believe, involves both parties opened to learn with each other. At issue is not only helping traditional populations to thrive nowadays, but also learning with them how to maintain a sustainable relation with our ecosystems. We, modern urban people, have a serious problem of overconsumption, which produces unsustainability, and we still did not find effective ways to deal with this problem. We need an intercultural dialogue about sustainability if we want to change our cultural patterns. In projects that join designers and native artisans, the dialogue about sustainability is usually limited to the objects physical attributes, such as renewability and energy use (Stegall, 2006; Thomas, 2006). The dialogue does not consider how artisans conceive their relation with the material world, especially because we tend to see crafts cultural attributes as symbols, motifs and shapes (Borges, 2011; Vencatachellum, 2005).

What can we, designers, learn with native artisans? Manners of integrating the resources available in our territories in our products and creations. Territories are understood in the sense of specific environments, of what we have at hand. This new manner includes rethinking the meaning of used products, which do not necessarily need to enter the category 'trash'. For me, the most important lesson learnt with the Caiçara artisans is that any material present in one's territory is part of the local resources, either we choose to use it or not – because we consider it 'trash'. I was astonished when I heard them refer to discarded material, such as a PET bottle, as part of the nature – they do not let it become trash. An intercultural dialogue with Caiçaras might help us create another meaning to the use and discard of products, rethinking our priorities and approaches to design.

This study claims that encounters between different cultures should be considered as opportunities to devise different patterns of production and consumption and, consequently, a more sustainable society. Once more, this proposition does not suggest taking a traditional culture as a romantic ideal for development. The importance of intercultural dialogue is making both cultures able to learn from each other and to create new solutions to their and our problems, co-creating new cultural patterns and getting rid of dysfunctional patterns.

We acknowledge that this proposition is only a kernel; it has to be developed in future research. Notwithstanding, with the multiplication of projects that involve designers and artisans, this proposition should be considered to provide the scope for an intercultural dialogue about sustainability.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This case study aimed to explore the relations between empowerment and culture through Guaraqueçaba Crafts Cooperative. All the questions that drove this study probed into these two topics. Moreover, these two words, empowerment [*empoderamento*] and culture, have proven to be meaningful to the participants. Rodrigo and Ruth affirmed that, at the cooperative, what they do is to encourage the artisans' empowerment, being cultural revitalization an essential aspect of their work. The women from Peças village strive collectively to change and improve their living conditions, seeing themselves as fighters and being proud of their achievements. Renato affirmed that all his work to valorize the Caiçara culture aimed to empower the Caiçara communities – to the point that he asked me to persist in researching about traditional populations' empowerment. The unit of analysis in this study, the relation between empowerment and culture, found resonance with the values of local artists and cooperative members. However, the findings do not allow a conclusive answer in regard of the empowerment of Guaraqueçaba Caiçara population.

The findings, notwithstanding, suggest that interventions aiming traditional peoples' empowerment should take into account the cultural dimension of sustainable development. This concern refers specifically to the meaning different cultures attribute to the concept 'development'. What is a good life for this culture? What means flourishing for them? How do they conceive well-being? What are the templates for collective ambitions? Different cultures may have different answers to these questions. This diversity is exactly what may allow the emergence of different and sustainable forms of development. As Vezzoli and Manzini (2008) say about the concept 'sustainable development': "not only are other forms of development possible, but there is a dire need for them" (p. 5).

Empowerment is the driving force, the power engine of local development. However, if we do not explore the different meanings of the word 'development', 'development' will be always associated with economic growth and well-being will be associated with consumption of goods. In most places it may not seem alarming, but in an EPA such

as Guaraqueçaba environmental sustainability is an essential concern. Here in this case, where the three pillars of sustainable development collide, we can grasp clearly the importance of cultural diversity to seek sustainability. The cultural dimension of empowerment and development has much to be explored in future research.

In the case of my future research – being a graphic designer, specialized in communicating information through the visual channel –, it will seek means of facilitating the intercultural dialogue about sustainability between artisans and their customers. On one side, there are urban consumers that are willing to be informed about the origin of what is being acquired, they want to buy something with meaning. On the other side, there are artisans of a traditional culture that need to market their production to urban consumers. Modern urban populations have already a well developed communication capacity. Therefore, in order to allow for intercultural dialogue, we should seek for means of amplifying the traditional populations' voice in this dialogue. As a graphic designer, my objective is to support traditional peoples' conveyance of their knowledge about their relation with the environment and the material world. Conveying the voice of traditional cultures is not only about communicating their heritage, the past component of culture. Culture being both heritage and project, pastness and futurity, the objective of my future research is to develop tools for the communities to convey the future component of their culture – their visions of flourishing.

Fausto (2006) comments about providing indigenous people with the communicative tools to engage an intercultural dialogue with modern urban publics:

At issue is not simply recognizing and valorizing the 'traditional' cultural manifestations of indigenous peoples, but providing the instruments for them to be able to 'indigenize' our cultural production. (p. 2-3)

My proposition of future research aims to allow people to have contact with different projects of development, offering the prospect that we can be, do and make differently. And hoping that this 'differently' might lead us toward sustainability.



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